A lively history of Colby College from its founding in 1813 to the present day

Founded by Baptists in Waterville, Maine (and originally named The Maine Literary and Theological Institution), Colby College began as a tiny place—half college, half seminary. It faced doom at the end of the Civil War but was rescued by Gardner Colby, a wealthy manufacturer whose $50,000 donation saved the college. Three years later, it changed its name to honor its benefactor. Sixty years after that, the tiny college had become choked by the city's success. Squeezed between the Kennebec River and the railroad tracks, it faced the daunting challenge of building a larger campus. This book tells the story of that audacious move, made in the darkest days of the Great Depression and funded by Waterville's residents, who raised $100,000 for a new campus on the heights above the city—on Mayflower Hill.

The years after the move were marked by vibrant growth and daring change, leading to an institutional prominence unimaginied by the founders. Using anecdotes and biographical asides to humanize this history, Earl H. Smith describes Colby's shift from a religious focus to secularism, from "coordination" to coeducation, and from provincialism to global notice. Smith tracks the growth of an ever-stronger faculty who were willing to make innovative changes in the curriculum and of trustees who dared to revolutionize student life by shedding outdated traditions. He brings to life the voices of students during the 1960s
TO BARBARA
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The years following the full settlement of Colby on its new campus were marked by vibrant growth and daring change, leading to an institutional prominence unimagined by its founders. The rapid evolution came in no small measure from the move itself—uprooting an entire institution and taking it across town, building a handsome new campus, and inviting broad support and encouragement. It also came from a succession of remarkable leaders who took inspiration and courage from the old story and carried Colby to a place among the finest small colleges in the land.

Colby's history has been written twice before. Edwin Carey Whittemore, pastor of the Waterville, Maine, Baptist Church, wrote *Colby College, 1820–1925: An Account of Its Beginnings, Progress and Service*, in 1927, on the centennial of the first year of classes. Ernest Cummings Marriner, beloved dean and Maine historian, completed *The History of Colby College* in time for the sesquicentennial celebration in 1963. Both volumes are indispensable to the full understanding of a remarkable institution, its people and its place.

This book is centered on the last half of the twentieth century, but it cannot begin there. The period from 1950 forward, after all, is barely more than a quarter of the entire history. This history begins with a retelling of the early tale and is woven with the story of Waterville, a Maine village that became a flourishing city of immigrants. It recalls the College's Baptist creation by righteous men who sought religious peace in the wilderness and were willing to hang the fate of a new institution on little more than a prayer or two. It tells of a tiny place—half college, half seminary—facing doom at the end of the Civil War and saved at the eleventh hour by a man whose hope for a theological school was never realized. Finally, the early story tells of a visionary president and of Waterville citizens, joined by hundreds of friends and strangers, rising up to rescue a college choked by the community's own success and, in the midst of war and depression, moving it, lock, stock, and barrel, to the heights above the city.

This prologue sets the stage for the tale of a new campus and, in all but name, a different place with a rich new purpose. It is the story of the move from religious focus to secularism, from "coordination" to coeducation, and from provincialism to global notice. It is the story of an ever-stronger faculty, willing to make innovative changes in the ways of teaching, and of trustees daring
to revolutionize student life and shed ill-fitting traditions. It is the story of students with new and louder voices, changing old rules, protesting an unpopular war and demanding, on campus and in the world, equality and social justice. And it is the story of a college slowly reversing its role from the protected to a protector of the city that once saved it. It is the story of Mayflower Hill.
MAYFLOWER HILL
PROLOGUE

ORIGINAL OWNERS

For ten thousand years all of the land in the sprawling river valley—from the large lake to the sea—belonged to the eastern Wabanaki, "people of the dawn," proud tribe of the Algonkin. The headwater lake was named for its shape, the head of the moose that had fed in its shallow since the beginning of time. The river was named Kennebec for its "long quiet waters" below the falls in the smooth tidewater where the Sebasticook tributary runs alongside. At the river joining was the Wabanaki village of the Caniba, extending more than a mile along the east bank of the Kennebec between the two rivers. Here the Caniba named the falls for their Chief Teconnet and took his name as well. They lived on the abundance of salmon, sturgeon and, in the salty water below, clams and cod. In winter they drew back from the water, sheltered in bark cabins and longhouses and sustained themselves with smoked fish and the bounty of the forest.

The first European intruders did not stay, coming only to fish and explore the edges of their discovery. Sebastian Cabot poked along the inlets in the summer of 1498, and took the land for King Henry VII, and for England. In 1530 Jacques Cartier sailed under the French flag of King Francis I and claimed the place as well. Samuel Champlain reinforced the French claim in 1604 and broadened the territory to include everything from Cape Breton to the Hudson River. He named it Acadia. The next year Captain George Weymouth anchored off Monhegan and insisted the place belonged to England. It took two centuries to sort it out, and through that time the natives suffered far more than either nation.

In 1606, some fourteen years before the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth, a British colony was established at the mouth of the river. The settlement, led by Raleigh Gilbert and George Popham, failed in the first winter. Captain John
Smith returned in 1615 and gave the name New England to the whole territory between New Found Land and the Hudson River. That same year the Indians of the Penobscot and the Kennebec began a ruinous two-year fight among themselves. Everyone lost. When it was over the English seized the land and began to move in among the remaining Wabanaki, settling a Plymouth Company tract of land fifteen miles wide, spanning the bank of the Kennebec from Topsham to Cornville.

The natives had more to fear from the white man’s illnesses than from his guns. Deadly infections spread among them even before the English came to stay. Passing fishermen gave them a mysterious fatal disease as early as 1564 and typhoid fever twenty years later. In the decade before the English arrived at Plymouth, three epidemics ravaged the eastern Wabanaki. Where once there were as many as twenty thousand native people east of the White Mountains, barely a quarter of them survived and the illnesses kept coming—smallpox, influenza, diphtheria, and measles—continuing for two centuries until their population all but disappeared.

The land at the confluence of the Kennebec and Sebasticook was in private hands in the autumn of 1675 when the natives first took arms against the English (King Philip’s War). The following summer, the entire river valley was in flames. The Wabanaki had run out of patience with the harsh English who saw them as infidels and swindled them out of fur and fish. The French, hoping to make them Catholics, treated them more kindly, and a dozen years later joined as allies against the English (King William’s War). The English prevailed and in 1692 the trespassers burned the Teconnet settlement to the ground, captured the warrior Bomaseen and scattered the surviving natives into the wilderness. The homeless Teconnet continued their alliance with the French and by 1693 had a powerful, unappointed leader, Father Sebastian Rale, sent by the Catholics of Quebec to Norridgewock to establish a mission. Rale opposed the building of forts and annoyed the English by denouncing the proposed treaties. In 1717, over Rale’s objections, a peace pact was signed with the governor of the Royal Court of Massachusetts, ruler of the troublesome District of Maine.

Fifty years passed, and heirs of the original Plymouth Company Kennebec tract, anxious to provide safety and bring new settlers, petitioned the court to build a fort at Teconnet Falls. The Indians objected and sent a delegation to ask Massachusetts Governor William Shirley to build no forts above the one in place at Richmond. They were willing to have the foreigners live among them, but they did not want them garrisoned inside a fort. He ignored them. A century later, when the immigrants arrived, there was no one left to argue
against the colonized neighborhoods that were commonplace along the Kennebec and throughout the new country.

In dismissing the Indian pleas, Shirley declared that if the Plymouth Company would construct a fort in Cushnoc (Augusta) he would build one at the falls fifteen miles up the river. Cushnoc got Fort Western, and a wagon road was cut along the river to the confluence of the Sebasticook, where General John Winslow built a second fort called Halifax. The commander at Richmond, William Lithgow, was sent to lead a garrison of eighty men. Many died from starvation and illness in the first winter of 1755, but even so, the Indians were no match for them. On May 18, 1757, the Teconnet made a final desperate skirmish before evaporating into the forest, never to fight again.

In April 1771 the English settlement at Teconnet, first called Kingfield, was incorporated by the Massachusetts Court as the fourth town in the District of Maine and renamed in honor of General Winslow. Four years later, almost to the day, the first blood of the American Revolution was spilled at the Concord Bridge; and in autumn 1775 the central house of the unmanned garrison at Fort Halifax, by then a town hall and tavern, greeted Benedict Arnold's doomed expedition on its faltering way to Quebec. The feisty Arnold had convinced George Washington and the new Continental Congress in Philadelphia to accept a plan to surprise the British garrison at Quebec. He would avoid the predictable route of the Saint Lawrence River and take the back door through the wilderness, up the Kennebec and down the Chaudiere. On September 11 Arnold marched eleven hundred men from Cambridge to Newburyport, where schooners carried them to the mouth of the Kennebec and up to Pittston to collect two hundred new wooden bateaux. They were tested in the short, calm journey to Winslow. The 20-foot boats, made of green pine and ribbed with oak, were sodden and heavy—four hundred pounds without provisions—and the carry beyond Ticonic Falls was near impossible. At Five Mile Rips the boats began to crack. When they met the first ice and fast water at the Great Falls of Norridgewock the men began to desert. The expedition faced a great deal in the way of disaster and treachery in the months ahead, but it got its first taste of ruin at the falls below Winslow.

The river place that confounded Arnold's troops also hindered the governing of the growing town. There were difficulties in the collection of taxes and in the provision of schools and preaching; in 1791 town fathers petitioned the Commonwealth to be rid of the bothersome west bank place they called Ticonic Village. Although the cross-river land had never been at the center of things (the Indians used it only as a burial ground) townspeople were reluctant to give it up, and the petition was delayed for five years while they experi-
mented with alternating town and religious meetings between the Lithgow meetinghouse on the east bank and the Sherwin Street home of Silas Redington across the river. It was impossible. Petitioners claimed that "in the spring season, at the annual meetings held in said Town, the Inhabitants thereof living on the opposite side from where the said meeting is to be held are frequently prevented by the particular situation of said River from crossing the same to attend said meeting." In 1801, with eight hundred of Winslow's 1250 inhabitants now living west of the river, the ruling court was again asked to cut the town in two. On June 23, 1802, the petition was granted, creating the town of Waterville and, by local decree, a place called West Waterville (Oakland).

Under the safe flag of the new nation, Maine families prospered. Farmers became sailors, and a burgeoning Kennebec shipbuilding industry soon dominated the world. Lumber and potatoes and, from the river itself, fish and ice became lucrative barter for foreign riches. Merchants, flush with unfettered free enterprise, began to build great homes on the high cliffs above the river.

The upriver twin towns of Winslow and Waterville flourished as well. From 1794 until the steamships came in the 1830s, a number of schooners, brigs, and ships were built at Waterville. The shipbuilding fostered more new shops and mills along the riverbank and beside the fast-moving Emerson Stream (later called Messalonskee for its giant muskellunge fish) draining seven lakes and feeding the Kennebec. A thriving manufacturing center grew all around it.
1. ALONG THE RIVER

HOME FOR A BAPTIST COLLEGE

It was an unlikely place to put a college. While the same might be said for most towns where the early colleges grew, the obstacles to a new institution at Waterville were especially daunting. Bowdoin had a head start and was closer to the population center of Portland and the city's well-heeled Congregationalists. The Waterville location was remote; travel was slow and awkward; the climate was harsh; the surroundings were rustic; and financial support, limited at first to Baptist followers, was scarce. Soon, new College buildings and promising industry popped up along the river, and the population began to grow. In time, everything improved but the weather.

In the colonial towns, family and community life centered on the power and politics of religion. The Baptists, moving north from Rhode Island and Massachusetts, were separatists, not reformers, insisting on absolute freedom and bent on proselytizing and missionary work to spread the word of God. Their aggression was both feared and persecuted by churches of the “standing order.” The first Baptist church in the District of Maine opened in Kittery in 1682 and was quickly closed by pestering town magistrates. It was nearly a century (1768) before a second church came and stayed at Gorham. By the early nineteenth century Waterville Baptists held sway even without a church building.

All of the churches wanted to train their own ministers and end the reliance on England for providing men of learning. It was from this need that nearly all of the early colleges were begun. Congregationalists had the first established church, and in 1636, the first college, Harvard. By the Revolution there were nine church colleges. Brown University (1765) was the first for the Baptists, but it supplied few preachers for the devout in the north woods where
churches were accustomed to supplying their own preachers: independent, self-taught men, rarely of the same theological bent.

Securing a Baptist seminary in Maine was aided in no small way by the First Amendment of the new Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The requirement left legislators little choice but to consider granting charters, land, and money to any denomination, not just to those of the “standing order.” In 1807 the Reverend Sylvanus Boardman of Livermore sent a letter to the Bowdoinham Baptist Association expressing concern that many ministers, “not understanding their mother tongue,” were sorely in need of an education. Three years later the association agreed to petition Massachusetts “to incorporate an institution for the purpose of promoting literary and theological knowledge.” Joined by Lincoln and Cumberland, in 1813 the Bowdoinham association submitted a plea asking for “a tract of good land, and cause it to be located as highlly in the center of the district as your wisdom may find convenient.” It was denied.

Although the founders dearly wanted a strictly Baptist seminary, political reality and sensitivity to the new Constitution caused them to ask for an institution of collegiate standing offering both theological and literary instruction. Even so, the rapidly prepared second petition barely disguised their intent:

Whereas Harvard College in Cambridge, as well as the other Colleges and seminaries in this state, have been liberally endowed, either by the appropriation of public lands, or otherwise, by grants of the General Court, and have been committed to the more particular direction and management of that specific part of the community, denominated Congregationalists: and whereas we have sustained a part, and not an inconsiderable part, of those appropriations, without having any particular share in the oversight and direction of such appropriations ever assigned, by authority, to that part of the community denominated Baptists, we therefore consider, and are firmly persuaded, that the General Court would do no injustice to any section of the Commonwealth, but would render more equal justice to the different sections, and largely promote the best good of the State generally, by kindly receiving and favorably answering the petition, to which we solicit the attention of your honorable body.

Legislative support was led by Representative Daniel Merrill of Sedgwick, a Congregational minister turned Baptist, and by the successful Bath merchant and Jeffersonian Democrat William King. It was an uphill fight. Despite protection of the new constitution, many were wary of embracing a faith not of
the “standing order.” Bowdoin College, nondenominational from its begin-
ning in 1794 but nonetheless stoutly Congregationalist, opposed the idea, but
not on issues of faith. With barely 200,000 souls in the entire district, Bowdoin
was struggling for its own foothold and wary of sharing scarce students with
a second college in Maine. With King’s help, the petition was adopted on Febru-
ary 27, 1813, establishing “a Literary Institution for the purpose of educating
youth, to be known by the name of The Maine Literary and Theological In-
stitution.” It was the 33rd chartered college in the new United States, and its
Baptist origin influenced its teachings for more than a century.

It was two years before the new institution was granted a place: Township
No. 3 on land near Bangor, purchased from the defeated Indians. It was good
timberland and would provide a fine income for the new college, but the place
was too remote. In 1816, the court agreed the institution could find a home
somewhere in the counties of Kennebec or Somerset. Waterville was inter-
ested; so were Farmington and Bloomfield. A committee visited the three places
and settled on Waterville on condition that within two years the town would
provide the land. The local government promised three thousand dollars
in municipal funds and citizens offered an additional two thousand dollars in
subscriptions guaranteed by Timothy Boutelle, Nathaniel Gilman, and seven
others. Other local Baptists were eager to subscribe. There were many who
thought the place was overripe for the civilized influence of a college. Years
before Dr. N. Whitaker had written his Waterville colleague, Dr. Obadiah
Williams, about locating a new college in the area. Williams, a Revolutionary
War surgeon and veteran of Bunker Hill, had been pushing for a seminary.
“Am agreeably affected by the noble and important design of erecting a Sem-
inary of learning in these parts,” Whitaker wrote, “where little skill is required
to discern a too hasty return to a state of Barbarism.” The citizens’ pledges
($1,797.50) were used to purchase a wooded plot a half-mile above the town,
between the Kennebec and the Messalonskee. Citing “legal problems,” most
likely having to do with the separation of the church from the state, the town
withdrew its pledge, but citizens raised $2,500 more to expand the original
plot to 179 acres, including more land south along the river.

With the matter of place settled, in February 1818, trustees assigned the new
institution two Massachusetts ministers: Jeremiah Chaplin as professor of di-
vinity and Ira Chase as professor of languages. Both turned them down, but
Chaplin, every inch a reflective Puritan, came to believe the position offered
was “a divinely given opportunity” and reconsidered. He agreed to teach reli-
gion, nothing more, and for a time at least, the new literary and theological in-
stitution would be theological only.
Chaplin's journey to Waterville began on June 20, 1818, when he set sail from Danvers aboard the coastal sloop Hero. With him were his wife, Marcia, their five children,1 and seven divinity students including George Dana Boardman who would become the institution's first graduate. They reached the Kennebec in two days; on the morning of the third the Hero ran aground on the shoals above Gardiner. The odd assembly walked the riverbank to Augusta, and the following morning boarded smaller blunt-ended long boats. With help from men and oxen pulling from the banks, they continued to Waterville where a welcoming committee put them up in the vacant home of the recently deceased Nathan Wood near the center of town. It was here that the first classes were held.

The Wood home was at the intersection of roads leading to Kendall’s Mills (Fairfield) and the Fairfield Meetinghouse (Fairfield Center). It became a tavern in 1840 and eight years later burned to the ground. In 1850, the partnership of Seavey and Williams built an inn on the site and named it The Elmwood. It too was destroyed by fire (1878) and was soon replaced by one of the original partners, Osborne Seavey, who persuaded the trustees of Colby University to advance him $15,000 for its cost. He rented it from the College until his business failed and the College took it back, only to lease it once again in 1885 to Eben and Harry Murch for $1,400 a year. In 1891 the College got out of the hotel business altogether, and sold the Elmwood to Henry Judkins for $15,000.

They were barely settled when Chaplin took it upon himself to organize and assume the pulpit of the First Baptist Church. Eight years later he oversaw the construction of a church building, the first in Waterville, and began to take the entire College to compulsory Sunday services. (Neither did it take the sober Calvinist long to form the Sons of Temperance, an organization never embraced by the local gentry.)

Trustees had a particular vision for the shape and appearance of a new campus, carved out among the birches, away from town and near the river. As with other early colleges, the buildings were placed in a row, fronted by a park. Teaching, preaching, dining, and sleeping were combined within the same structures. There were already examples at Yale and Andover and another had

1. John, 11; Hannah, 9; Jeremiah Jr., 5; Adoniram, 2; and 4-month-old Anne.

8) MAYFLOWER HILL
begun at Bowdoin. It took a while to raise building funds; in the meantime the District of Maine became a state. The institution’s good friend William King was chairman of a constitutional convention, held in the summer of 1819. The year before, when Maine first petitioned to leave Massachusetts, there were already twenty-two states in the union, divided 11 to 11 on the issue of slavery. Under a compromise, Maine and Missouri simultaneously became new states in January 1820. In Maine, King was elected governor.

Among the first acts of the new legislature was the affirmation of the Massachusetts charter for the Maine Literary and Theological Institution, amended in significant ways. The charter insisted no student could be denied admission or other privileges “on the ground that his interpretations of the scripture differ from those which are contained in the articles of faith adopted, or to be adopted by the institution.” Without this provision, the institution might never have grown beyond a small seminary in the woods.

The legislature also claimed authority to “alter, limit, or restrain” the power of the institution’s trustees, prohibiting them from applying a religious test in the selection of their own members, a change the Institution accepted willingly in order to install the non-Baptist Timothy Boutelle as its treasurer. With Boutelle in the boardroom, it was not long before men of other faiths were sitting with the Baptists in the circle of power. Lastly, the legislature added a clause giving trustees the authority to grant degrees and, with this simple amendment, created a true college.

In 1821, reflecting its now enlarged authority, trustees presented the second legislature a petition to change the college name. The board hoped to name it for a major benefactor, but none would come for another half-century. In the meantime, the name of its founding town suited well enough. On February 5 it became Waterville College. Trustees elected the Reverend Daniel Barnes of New York to become the first president, but he turned them down. The founding Professor Chaplin took the job.

Within a year the re-named College completed gift subscriptions for its first substantial building; and two Waterville builders, Peter Getchell (bricklayer) and Lemuel Dunbar (carpenter), began work on South College, an austere four-story Federal-style brick structure, 80 by 40 feet. It included thirty-two double student rooms, recitation halls, and a library. The following year Getchell and Dunbar teamed to build a near-matching building, North College, for three thousand dollars. It was fifteen years before the row was completed with the construction of Recitation Hall in the middle. With its boxy, triple-stage tower holding the College’s Revere Bell, the building, later named for Colby’s seventh president, James T. Champlin, was the tallest structure in
Maine. Federal in style and one of the first New England educational buildings designed by an American architect (Thomas Ustick Walter of Philadelphia), it was principally a chapel with four basement classrooms and a small library taken out of South College. The finished line of handsome buildings was a proud feature in Waterville, even something of a curiosity in a town made mostly of wood. The imposing row became known as “The Bricks.”

A growing Waterville was soon to have other modern additions. In 1823 the first bridges were built over the two rivers; and five years later a steamboat, the Ticonic, began to ply up and down the river with Waterville as its northernmost port, but it foundered too many times on the ledges in the fast water and its terminus quickly retreated to Augusta.

Curtailment of the steamboat slowed transportation from the south, but a different kind of traffic was about to bring new riches from the north, not over the water but on horseback and on foot over an old Indian trail called the Kennebec Road. Shoved out of Maine two centuries before, the French Catholic people of lower Quebec were returning. Jean Mattheu was first in 1827, and others followed, first in small numbers and then, at the end of the Civil War, in great waves that turned the region's religious and cultural milieu upside down.

Seeking work at the expanding mills, the newcomers were not welcomed. They were insulted as “lard-eaters” and “frogs”2 and mocked for their strange language and religion. Outwardly, none of it mattered to them. They had paying jobs for six long days, a strong faith for seven, and were ardent about both. The wiry, pomaded men moved their large families into the south of town, near the river in a place others had named The Plains, and built their own shops and churches and schools. The Yankees moved away from them, up from the river, but at the same time their young students—in town and at the College—began to learn their language.

In 1834, the College French teacher was the Reverend Samuel Francis Smith, who took the job for an extra $100 a year; his principal work was as the Baptist preacher. They were his first jobs after graduation from Andover Theological Seminary where he had written the words to “My Country 'Tis of Thee,” a song he was eagerly teaching Sunday school youngsters in Waterville. At Andover, Smith worked as a translator for his organist friend Lowell

2. Mostly manual laborers, the French were slurred as lard-eaters for their energy-rich fatty diets. Their labeling as frogs derived from the time of the American Revolution when the allied French troops wore closed, short-tailed coats and were said to resemble an army of frogs as they moved through the wilderness.
Mason, a well-known publisher of public school music. Mason asked Smith to furnish him with something striking for the upcoming Fourth of July celebration. Smith liked a German song, “God Bless our Native Land,” and in one afternoon he wrote new English words for a song he called “America.” The song became widely popular, and during the Civil War it served as a rallying hymn for the north. For a century it rivaled Francis Scott Key’s “Star Spangled Banner” for honors as the national anthem, a matter not settled until Congress made its choice in 1931.

There is a Colby tie to the Pledge of Allegiance as well. Near the end of the century, James Upham, Class of 1860, was editor of the magazine *Youth’s Companion*. He was determined to rekindle national pride in time for the Columbian Exposition that would commemorate the 400th anniversary of America’s discovery. Upham and fellow editor Francis Bellamy lobbied President Benjamin Harrison and Congress for a national Columbus Day holiday, and were themselves put in charge of developing a special program for school children. At Upham’s request, Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance for the children to read on the first Columbus Day, October 12, 1892.

Smith preached at a church that still stands at the intersection of Ten Lots and Marston roads in nearby Fairfield until 1842 when he became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Newton Center, Massachusetts, and editor of the *Christian Review*. He returned to Waterville to speak in 1863, sharing the platform with Ralph Waldo Emerson at the annual gathering of the Erosophian Adelphi literary fraternity. The *Waterville Mail* reviewed the speeches of both the orator and the poet. Emerson got the worst of it: “[his] epigrammatic style of writing is no more peculiar than his oratory.” And, the paper said, Smith’s poem “had one great merit—in brevity.” Emerson got the last word. He

3. Initially Smith wrote five verses, but he never published the middle stanza as it was sharply anti-British: “No more shall tyrants here, With haughty steps appear, And soldier-bands: No more shall tyrants tread, Above the patriot dead, No more our blood be shed, By alien hands.” The melody today forms the British national anthem, “God Save the King.”

4. Katherine Lee Bates, who wrote “America the Beautiful,” was born in a Ten Lots farmhouse less than a mile from Smith’s church.
later told a reporter he found his Waterville audience "cool, silent and unresponsive."

Increased local instruction in French may have helped melt the differences of the two cultures, but the English still dominated. The College, while open to all, was training a few teachers and many Baptist men of the cloth. The Catholics, who one day would provide many of those who saved Colby for Waterville, sent their college-going sons and daughters elsewhere. The old streets kept their English names, and the old-line inhabitants encouraged and embraced the Anglicizing of French family names: Roys became Kings; Levesques, Bishops; Coutures, Taylors; and Vashons, Cowans.

Many thought it would be useful if the French changed their religion as well. Charles Hathaway was one. Stern and devout, Hathaway was an annoying man, pestering friends and neighbors with religious tracts, and making endless trouble for the leaders of his Baptist church. He viewed The Plains as a ripe mission site and for a dozen years proselytized the strong Catholics there, finally seeing to the establishment of Waterville's Second Baptist Church in their very midst.

Hathaway had begun his working life as an employee of his uncle at a small shirt factory in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He found the work dull and soon left to become a printer, first in Massachusetts for E. Merriam and Company of dictionary fame and, for less than a month in 1847, in Waterville as publisher of The Union, on the Hanscom Block at the corner of Main and Elm. The newspaper carried barely any news at all. It was packed with Hathaway's favorite sermons, and few would buy it. He quickly sold the paper for $475 to Ephraim Maxim who named it the Eastern Mail. Maxim's paper carried local news and was a success.6

Hathaway had come to Waterville to take a wife (with the fortuitous name of Temperance); and when he abandoned the news business, the couple moved to Watertown, Massachusetts, where in 1849 he opened his own shirt factory. It was the same year the first trains came into Waterville, and the freight-carrying opportunity may have induced him to return to Maine. Three years later, with his younger brother George as a one-third, silent partner, he purchased an acre of land near the train station from Sam Appleton and built C. F. Hathaway & Company.

5. In the next century, as new residential neighborhoods expanded both in Waterville and in the mother town of Winslow, the French tipped the scales with more street names of their own.
6. It is the newspaper to which today's local Sentinel can be traced.
The shir tmaker with the Old Testament face lived in mortal fear, not only of the devil but also of his business competitors. His employees began ten-hour workdays with a required session of prayer; when he hired his talented cutters and makers, he forced them to sign “non-compete” agreements so he would not lose them. If a retail store made an exclusive contract with another maker, he took out newspaper ads inviting customers to swap their silver dollars for his gold ones if they traded with him. To the lasting glory of his company, he quickly learned that the prize would go to the one who made the best shirts, a credo his successors were bound to live by.

ELIJAH PARISH LOVEJOY

The issues that sparked the Civil War smoldered for decades before the 1861 siege of Fort Sumter. The northern fervor against slavery grew steadily through those years, even in remote Waterville. Elijah Lovejoy took the germ of it with him when he graduated in 1826.

Elijah was born November 9, 1802, in a simple home in Freetown Plantation on the shore of a pond named for his grandfather, Francis Lovejoy. The eldest son of the Reverend Daniel and Elizabeth Pattee Lovejoy, he got his name from the local Congregational minister, the Reverend Elijah Parish, who had tutored his father in staunch Calvinist theology. Daniel combined teaching and farming to eke out a bare existence for his family. The family was poor, but the house was abundant in the instruction of the evils of humanity.

Lovejoy was home-schooled until he was eighteen, and although he showed much promise, there was no money for more learning. In 1821 he dared to write Maine’s new governor, William King, asking for tuition money. “Who knows, Honorable Sir,” he wrote, “you may assist one in coming forward who shall take a part in the political theater of the age.” King ignored him, but in the spring of 1822 the Reverend Benjamin Tapin of the South Parish Congregational Church in Augusta found a way to send him to Monmouth Academy. That fall Elijah transferred to the nearer China Academy where a young Waterville College student...

7. Daniel suffered from depression and eventually hanged himself in the family barn. Strict church elders ordered that he be buried beneath the Albion-China crossroads. The constant rumbling of carts over his head, they said, would keep him from finding peace, fair punishment for the unpardonable sin of taking his own life. Years later they agreed he had suffered enough and allowed his body to be exhumed and taken to the nearby family cemetery.
graduate, Henry Stanwood, was principal. Stanwood encouraged Elijah to study with Jeremiah Chaplin. Lovejoy entered Waterville College as a sophomore and within a year was put in charge of the College’s Latin preparatory school, precursor of Waterville Academy (later Coburn). He graduated at the top of his class in 1826. Chaplin said he was “very near to the rank of those distinguished men who have been honored by the title of universal genius.”

Lovejoy did not stay long in Maine, spending less than a year as principal of his own China Academy before moving west to teach in Saint Louis, finding theological comfort and conversion at the First Presbyterian Church. He soon enrolled in its prominent theological school at Princeton. He completed his studies in 1833, and was offered editorship of the church’s new weekly, the St. Louis Observer, the first religious newspaper west of the Mississippi. He reveled in his second vocation, and made his editorial purpose clear in the very first edition: “While the Observer will seek to win its way to the hearts and consciences of men by the kindness of the sentiment it breathes, it will not temporize as it goes,” he wrote. His readers were forewarned.

The proponents of slavery were not the only ones who felt the prick of his sharp pen. Like other Protestant leaders of the day, he railed against Rome and the pope, but it was easier for the Catholics of Saint Louis to forgive his ranting against “popery” than to abide his unrelenting stand against slavery. In 1835 patrons of the church asked him to stop writing about slavery altogether. He replied:

I will submit to no such dictation. If I back down, they will strike again. Today a public meeting declares you shall not discuss the subject of slavery in any of its bearings, civil or religious. Tomorrow another meeting decided that it is against the peace of society that religion be discussed and the edict goes for to muzzle the press. The next day another meeting and it goes to the end of the chapter and there are no freedoms left. The truth is, my fellow citizens, if you give ground a single inch, there is no stopping place. If the mob rules, then every man must protect himself with the muzzle of a gun. We must stand by the Constitution or all is lost.

He was endured in Saint Louis until the spring of 1836, when he roundly denounced the public lynching of a free Negro, Francis J. McIntosh, and the court’s acquittal of the killers. Reaction to his condemnation was violent. Thugs came at night and destroyed his press. He fled up river to Alton, in the free state of Illinois, where he fared no better. His first Alton press arrived at the docks on the Sabbath and could not be moved. That night it was pushed into the water.
Some of Alton's citizens were outraged, and at a public meeting pledged to replace the ruined press, but their help came with the caveat that he must stop his endless call for freeing slaves. His harangue was hurting the business of shipping cotton. He ignored them, and his opposition to bondage hardened. Although he never claimed to be an abolitionist, his changing views were placing him ever closer to William Lloyd Garrison, whose call for abolition was stirring things in the east. When Lovejoy's third press arrived, he spoke out in his renamed newspaper, the *Alton Observer*:

The groans and sighs and tears of the poor slave have gone up as a memorial before the throne of God. In due time they will descend in awful curses upon this land unless averted by the speedy repentance of us all. And as surely as there is a thunderbolt in Heaven and strength in God's right hand to launch it, so surely will it strike the authors of this cruel oppression. Slavery is a sin. It must be abolished.

Soon after he stood in a public meeting to respond to a citizens' resolution calling for him to stop.

If I have been guilty of no violation of law, why am I hunted up and down continually like a partridge in the mountains? Why am I threatened with the tar-barrel? Why am I waylaid every day, and from night to night, and my life in jeopardy every hour?

Tension and conflict escalated on the Fourth of July when Lovejoy used the occasion of the nation's sixty-first birthday to print a notice inviting the people of Alton to form a chapter of the American Anti-Slavery Society. A month later, in the dark of night his print shop was wrecked again, and his despisers multiplied. Shortly before his final stand in November 1837 he spoke at a noisy public meeting: "You may hang me, you may burn me at the stake as you did McIntosh in St. Louis, but you cannot silence me. . . . The contest has commenced here and here it must be finished, if need be until death. . . . If the civil authorities refuse to protect me, I must look to God; and if I die, I have determined to make my grave in Alton."

The new press came by steamboat to Saint Louis and was taken twenty-five miles up and across the Mississippi to Alton. It arrived at three in the morning at a secret place south of town. Its defenders were assembled on the riverbank to help bring it ashore; but there were Lovejoy haters there as well, and they watched as horse and wagon took it to Winthrop Gilman's stone warehouse near the riverbank.

Through the long day and night Lovejoy and his allies watched from the
windows, rifles at hand. On the morning of the seventh, fuming crowds began to gather in town, on street corners, and in taverns, plotting against the editor. Angry residents were going to wreck his press again, and this time they might get rid of him as well. At the Tontine Saloon, lawyer William Carr raised his whiskey glass to the good old boys who would follow him to the warehouse and ordered a round for the house. By nightfall, they became a drunk and deadly mob, first throwing stones; then, as the moon cast an eerie light on their warehouse target, firing their rifles. The defenders fought back. One member of the mob was mortally wounded, and for a time his compatriots withdrew, firing from a safe distance. In the nearby town the reverberating noise of distant gunfire frightened the Presbyterian minister’s wife, and she climbed to the belfry and rang the bell to sound an alarm. The mayor, John Krum, went to the warehouse door, waving a white flag, pleading with the occupants to give up the press and save their necks. Lovejoy would hear none of it. By midnight the rioters were lighting torches. Someone carried a flare up a ladder and set the roof ablaze.

No one knew why Lovejoy went to the door, but as he stepped outside, his frame made a clear silhouette against the moonlit sky. Shots rang out. Three musket balls entered his chest, another his stomach, and yet another in the flesh of his left arm. He managed to make his way back inside and up a set of stairs to a small room where he was placed on a cot. Within moments he was dead.

Someone from inside shouted the news that Lovejoy had been killed, but the milling crowd refused to leave, threatening to kill the rest. The defenders ran out the back way and into the night, leaving Lovejoy’s body behind. Some of the mob entered the building, carried the press to a window, and pushed it out onto the riverbank where it was smashed and the broken pieces hurled into the river.

All that night Lovejoy’s friends were afraid to retrieve his body, but at first light a lone black freeman, William Scotch Johnston, went to get him. The next morning, November 9, Elijah’s thirty-fifth birthday, a small cortège made its way through town drawing cruel shouts from onlookers. Only a few were present at the grave where they buried him in the nearby hills, and they vowed to keep the place a secret. Lovejoy’s widow, Celia, was too grief-stricken to attend. She had been married only two years and was left with their infant son, Edward Payson, and a second child, still in her womb. Johnston was there. He had made the wooden casket and decorated it with the stain of pokeberry juice. He wept as he helped lower the body into the ground.

Word of Lovejoy’s death stunned the fracturing nation. The Boston Re-
corder said the murder called forth “a burst of indignation which has not had its parallel in this country since the battle of Lexington.” Abraham Lincoln said Lovejoy’s killing was “the most important event that ever has taken place in the western world.” President John Quincy Adams later recalled the day of the tragedy and likened the impact of the news to an earthquake. Ralph Waldo Emerson said “the brave Lovejoy gave his breast to the bullets of a mob for the rights of free speech and opinion, and died when it was better not to live.”

A month after the killing, John Brown attended a Lovejoy memorial service in Hudson, Ohio. At the end of the program Brown stood and vowed to dedicate his life to Lovejoy’s memory and to the elimination of slavery. Twenty-two years later, nearly to the day, he too became a martyr, hung for his daring raid at Harper’s Ferry. On the way to the gallows he predicted, as Lovejoy had, that “the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.”

In 1862, the year Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Elijah’s brother Owen came to Alton as an Illinois congressman. He was Lincoln’s friend and had pressed for the executive order freeing the slaves. Some said Owen was the architect of the proclamation. He spoke for two hours and did not mention his brother until the end. “The blood of my brother flowed down these streets and mingled with the great river that flows to the sea,” he told the somber crowd. “And, yea, shall so much more blood flow, ’til we achieve the dream of liberty.”

Some would later say the deadly fight at Alton was the first armed battle of the Civil War.

CIVIL WAR

The greatest peril for the early American colleges came at the moments of war, when the nation was riveted on its survival and young people were called away to fight. The men of Waterville and its college served gallantly in the Civil War, but when it was over and the nation preserved, the tiny College found itself with few students to pay the bills, and its endowment, savaged by withdrawals, nearly depleted. The town itself was reeling and could do little to help. Just as the College considered whether to build a war memorial or close its doors, the answer came from an unlikely savior. The intercession of Gardner Colby was a mix of fate, religious philanthropy, and a strong dose of nostalgia.

In 1833 the College literary fraternity debated the question “Ought Congress to interfere in the abolition of Slavery?” The answer was resoundingly affirmative. That summer abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison came to speak; and
students were stirred to action. On the afternoon of the Fourth of July they created the Anti-Slavery Society of Waterville College. The making of a society with such high moral purpose seemed sufficient reason enough to whoop it up, and whether students drank their toasts with water or smuggled wine no one knew, but everyone agreed a good deal of noise bounced off The Bricks that night. President Chaplin was outraged. In chapel the next morning, he said they had sounded like "the braying of wild asses." Indignant students demanded an apology. When Chaplin refused, the students walked out. The unmoved president followed with a broadside in which he threatened stern discipline. Students appealed to the faculty claiming their "character as professors of religion [to be] was injured." It was too much for Chaplin, and he resigned. Following a trustee inquiry, the College's first president was given high praise and a parting gift of one thousand dollars.

Six years before the war began, a fugitive slave named Anthony Burns was captured by Boston militia and returned to bondage. In Waterville, citizens posted a notice calling for a public meeting to see if the people "will have the bells tolled in token of their sympathy [for Burns] and also take any other measures in regard to the case." Among the protestors were the College's president, James Champlin; Joshua Drummond '46, soon to be speaker of the Maine House of Representatives; and, in the last year of his life, Timothy Boutelle, College treasurer. Church bells rang for an hour.

Local leanings against slavery were evident in other ways as well. Five months before the war, the town cast its votes for presidential electors: 504 for Abraham Lincoln, 186 for three other candidates. Local support for Lincoln was bolstered by the excitement over his Maine vice presidential running mate, Hannibal Hamlin. In late February 1861, Hamlin passed through the Waterville station on the way to the March 4 inauguration ceremonies in Washington. The College students greeted him, and "gave some vent to their enthusiasm by vigorously applauding the short, but patriotic, address."

When news came that Fort Sumter had fallen, students quickly formed their own cadre and began to drill along campus walkways. On April 18, senior Frank Heseltine stood on the steps of Recitation Hall and yelled: "President Lincoln has called for 75,000 volunteers to save the nation. I am going to be one of them. Who else?" The following morning a recruiting office opened upstairs in the Hanscom block, where Hathaway had tried to run a newspaper. Charles Henrickson '64 was the first to enlist. Soon after, Waterville's Heath brothers, William and Francis, opened a second office in the Plaisted Block on Main Street. Some forty students, a third of the student body, joined with some eighty local volunteers to form a company that on its first drill marched
to Appleton Street where Charles Hathaway gave them each a fine French flannel shirt.

It was evident to President Champlin that he would soon have no students, and at a hastily called assembly in the chapel he announced the spring term was over. On May 21 the recruits made their way to Portland where most of them helped to form Companies G and H of the Third Maine Volunteers. With little training, the two companies met their first test in the battle at Bull Run in July. The eager Hendrickson was captured and spent nearly a year in Libby and Salisbury prisons.

Six Waterville College men served in the famed Twentieth Maine Regiment under Bowdoin’s honored general Joshua Chamberlain. Among them were Richard Cutts Shannon ’62 and Henry Clay Merriam ’64. Shannon enlisted as a sergeant in the Fifth Maine Volunteers, and was captured at the May battle at Chancellorsville. He was exchanged from Libby Prison in Richmond in time to fight at Gettysburg. Merriam enlisted at home, in Houlton, Maine, in 1862, at the end of his sophomore year, when most of his classmates had already gone to war. Joining Chamberlain’s regiment, Merriam was captain of Company H, a new outfit mustered barely in time to fight the September battle at Antietam.

That month Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and soon after met with Daniel Ullman, a Union officer who had pressed the president to allow the enlistment of the soon-to-be-freed slaves. Lincoln hesitated, then agreed, and sent Ullmann to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton for help in organizing five black volunteer regiments for Louisiana. Ullman took Vice President Hamlin to the meeting with him; afterward Hamlin turned to his friend and fellow Waterville College trustee, Governor Abner Coburn, for help in scouring the Maine regiments for officers willing to lead black troops. One of those nominated by Coburn was Captain Merriam of the Twentieth Maine, who left Chamberlain’s campaign six months before the battle at Gettysburg to take command of the Third Colored Infantry in Louisiana. On April 9, 1865, only hours before Robert E. Lee’s surrender in faraway Virginia, Lieutenant Colonel Merriam’s regiment, renamed the Seventy-third Infantry Corps d’Afrique, was the first to plant its colors on the parapet of Fort Blakeley in the siege of Mobile, Alabama. Merriam led the charge of one thousand black troops, and for his “conspicuous gallantry” was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. It was the last great battle of the Civil War.8

8. Merriam went on to make a full military career, fighting the Indians in the American west and leading troops again in the Spanish-American War at the end of the century. He retired a major general in 1903 and died in Portland nine years later.
Except in the annals of military history, Merriam's contributions brought no public fame. The opposite was true for another Waterville College graduate, twenty-five years his senior. Benjamin Butler '38, was half soldier, half politician, and entirely flamboyant. Butler and Lovejoy were, far and away, the College's most famous alumni. Unlike Lovejoy, Butler sought acclaim. Although his reputation as a hell-raising college student was greatly exaggerated, he was indeed troublesome and enjoyed being known as brash. It brought him more votes, and he was always looking for votes. In his autobiography, written sixty years after his graduation, he told of fantastic exploits at Waterville College. He claimed to have asked to be excused from daily chapel on grounds his chances of being saved were so slim that preaching to him was a waste of time. He said he tied up the clapper of the College bell to keep it from calling students to chapel and, as pranks, stole all sorts of things, including pigs, chickens, and the College gate. It is unlikely any of it was true. Faculty records from that time when miscreants rarely escaped detection turned up no evidence of misconduct on the part of young Butler. It seems instead that he, like students before and since, could not resist embellishing college exploits in the comfortable distance of time.

Butler came to Waterville after being turned down for an appointment at West Point. He was beginning his senior year when Lovejoy was murdered. Word of the martyrdom fueled antislavery sentiment in the north, especially in young Butler who within twenty years was in a position to do something about it, using his bully pulpit to support the rights of former slaves, create black Union regiments, and press the Confederate army to recognize the military status of captured black soldiers.

A criminal lawyer and a Democrat, Butler served terms in both the Massachusetts House and Senate, and in 1859 lost a bid for governor. It was his strong support of the Union and not his party affiliation that finally got him the military appointment he wanted. Abraham Lincoln made him a brigadier general, and the Democrat Butler quickly became an untouchable maverick in a largely Republican-led army. Within days he mustered a regiment and, without a fight, led them through a blockade to capture proslavery Baltimore.

When New Orleans fell, Butler was sent as commander of the occupying forces and promptly got into trouble. In April 1862 he issued the infamously General Order 28, the "Women's Order," stipulating that southern women who insulted his troops would be treated as prostitutes. It caused an uproar on both sides of the conflict. Confederate President Jefferson Davis said Butler was an "outlaw" and would be hanged if they could catch him. Union allies abroad were incensed as well. By fall the criticism of Butler for his affront had
not abated, and he was replaced as commander in New Orleans and sent to lead the troops in Virginia and North Carolina and, eventually, to deal with election riots in New York City.

Through his colorful military career Butler collected an array of nicknames, none of them complimentary. For his stern treatment of the citizens of New Orleans, including the hanging of a Confederate soldier who pulled down the federal flag, he was called “The Beast.” His infamous “Women’s Order” earned him an added sobriquet, “The Brute,” and his alleged penchant for confiscating the silverware from New Orleans’ gentry got him the nickname “Spoons.” Although most historians later called him a brilliant military strategist, Commanding General Ulysses Grant thought Butler’s troops too often got themselves trapped. For that, the general earned Grant’s title as “Bottled Up Butler.”

When Lincoln faced reelection in 1864, the Republican party rejected his Maine vice president and Lincoln sent an emissary to General Butler to see if he was interested. Butler sent an eerie and prophetic reply: “Ask him what he thinks I have done to deserve to be punished at 46 years of age by being made to sit as presiding officer of the Senate and listen for four years to debates more or less stupid in which I could take no part or say a word, or even be allowed to vote. Tell him that I said laughingly that with the prospects of a campaign before us, I would not quit the battlefield to be vice president even with himself as president, unless he would give me bond in sureties in the full sum of his four year’s salary that within three months of his inauguration he will die unresigned.” The party settled on Andrew Johnson, and Lincoln was assassinated within a month of his second inauguration.

Butler retired from the army in 1864, returned to Massachusetts, converted to Republicanism, and was elected to Congress where he led the impeachment of the new president.9

9. Butler’s appetite for politics was insatiable. He ran for Governor of Massachusetts no fewer than six times, finally getting himself elected in 1882. His political career ended two years later when he garnered only 2 percent of the popular vote in a bid for the presidency under the flags of the Greenback-Labor and Anti-Monopoly parties. In 1889, at age seventy-one, Butler returned to Waterville to address an alumni gathering, when he made the somewhat astonishing proposal for a “Union of the English Speaking Peoples” by the creation of a political alliance among the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. He was, among many other things, a most unpredictable man.
At war’s end, Butler’s name stood high on the list of national heroes—Waterville’s answer to Brunswick’s Chamberlain—but there were other, albeit unsung, heroes as well. At least two Waterville College men served aboard the ironclads: Robinson Turner on the Confederate Merrimac and Cushman Hendrickson on the Union Monitor. Twenty-six students, well more than half of those who left the College to fight, died for the Union cause. Lorenzo Smith ’50, a Vermonter caught in the southern draft while teaching in Arkansas, gave his life for the Confederacy. More than one hundred men of the town were killed as well.

A SAVIOR

Despite the ruinous war, there were some, like Butler, who became famous, and there were others whose fortunes grew. Gardner Colby was neither famous nor a profiteer, but the war had made him rich.

Born in Bowdoinham in 1810, Gardner was the son of a sea captain, Josiah, who died in despair two years after losing his fortune in the War of 1812. Gardner’s mother, Sarah, a widow at twenty-five, brought her four young children to Waterville where she sought work. At age ten Gardner took a job at a Silver Street potash plant to help support the struggling family, now befriended by Jeremiah Chaplin, pastor and leader of the new local institute.

Colby was in the crowd of local citizens who gathered to celebrate the dedication of the South College building, the first of The Bricks, in 1821. The evening observance was marked by an “illumination” with tallow candles lit behind each of the thirty-two panes of glass on two sides of the building. Set against the dark backdrop of the forest, it was an unforgettable sight, especially for the young Colby. He remembered it all of his life.

When the family could not make ends meet in Waterville, Sarah was forced to place her children separately with local families and to move by herself to Charlestown, near Boston, where she began a small business. Gardner was sent to live in the Maine town of Saint Albans for a year before rejoining his mother. In Boston, Gardner took his first job as a grocery delivery boy and then became a dry goods clerk. In 1831 he opened his own business, selling women’s fashions: lace, gloves, and hosiery. Hardworking and scrupulous, the unschooled Gardner became a success, expanding his business, first to wholesaling, then importing, and finally as a manufacturer of woolen fabric. It was the wool that made him rich. The federal government bought as much as he could make, to outfit the Union army.
On a winter Sunday morning in 1864 Colby and his wife, Mary, were in their usual pew in the Newton Center Baptist Meeting House. Samuel B. Swaim was the preacher. In his sermon Swaim recounted a chance meeting with Jeremiah Chaplin in Portland, forty years before. Chaplin had come from a meeting with a wealthy man who had rebuffed his appeal to help the College, and he was depressed. Over and over he moaned to Swaim: “God save Waterville College! Waterville College must not perish!” Swaim’s retelling of the story, coupled with the lasting image of the long-ago “illumination” of South College, burned in Colby’s mind. The next day he told his wife he wished to make a gift to save Waterville College.

That August Colby was guest speaker at the Waterville College commencement dinner in the town hall. Champlin was the only one who knew why Colby had come. Without embellishment, Colby stood and read the terms of his agreement. He would give an endowment of $50,000 if the College raised $100,000 on its own. The audience sat in stunned silence and then erupted into wild cheering and stomping. Waterville College was not going to perish after all. Matching money was raised in two years. Colby was invited to join the College’s board of trustees, and served until his death in 1879, by which time his gifts, including bequests, topped $200,000. In 1866, filled with gratitude and flush with the promise of a magnificent endowment, trustees at last were able to name the College for a benefactor. By act of the Maine Legislature, on January 23, 1867, Waterville College became Colby University.

The original Colby gift made the once-struggling institution much more secure. Receipts in 1866 exceeded the year’s budget by some two thousand dollars, and it was agreed Colby would be the first college in the north to honor its war dead with a building. In the late summer of 1866, barely a year after the surrender and two years before the first Memorial Day, trustees agreed to construct Memorial Hall. The money came from a budget surplus and from the sale of timber and stumpage rights on the Penobscot County land held from the original grant. Gardner Colby added the largest amount ($4,100) and within a year $16,000 was in hand.

The chosen location was the site of the College’s original building, the wood-frame house built for Jeremiah Chaplin. President Champlin spoke at the cornerstone ceremony in August 1867, citing the great need for classrooms that for thirty years had been in the often-flooded basement of Recitation Hall. (It was unthinkable to trade space with the dry chapel upstairs.) New classrooms were to be made in space vacated by the chapel, which was moved again, this time to the first floor of the west wing of the new building. The second floor became an alumni hall for special gatherings. The smaller east wing was the new library.
Designed by Alexander Esty of Boston, Memorial Hall was made of rubblestone quarried a mile west of the campus. Woodwork in the elegantly paneled interior was by a local carpenter, J. P. Blunt. The building was dedicated at commencement, 1869, at ceremonies held outdoors, beneath the imposing belfry tower, home to a finicky winding clock. One of the dignitaries who passed the building key along the platform to Champlin was the chairman of the board, former vice president and now U.S. Senator Hannibal Hamlin of the highlands in Hamden.

It was another distinguished Hamlin, Charles '47 of the College faculty, who spurred efforts to have as the building’s centerpiece a copy of The Lion of Lucerne by the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. A marble tablet memorializing the names of fallen alumni was part of the original design for the Seavers Room in the library. Hamlin thought the plaque by itself was uninspiring. The original lion, carved on a hillside at Lucerne, honored Swiss guards killed in 1792 defending Louis XVI in Paris. Henry Burrage, pastor of the Baptist Church and a College trustee, saw it and suggested to Hamlin that Memorial Hall have a replica. Martin Milmore was commissioned to make the piece—eight feet long and thirty-nine inches high, weighing four tons—in time for its separate dedication at Commencement two years later. Milmore’s rendition differed from Thorvaldsen’s only in size and in the insertion of the U.S. shield for that of France’s beneath the dying lion’s head.10

Even before the war was over, the town of Waterville had begun to raise funds for its own memorial. The Soldiers’ Monument Association assessed dues (one dollar for men, fifty cents for women) and the town appropriated one thousand dollars and an equal amount for a war memorial building in West Waterville. The old burial ground on Elm Street fronting Waterville Classical Institute was public land, and in 1865, with most of the graves removed, the town agreed to name it Monument Park and have the new sculpture as its centerpiece. Like the College, the association called on Milmore and selected a bronze casting of his popular Citizen Soldier, copies of which soon proliferated in towns throughout the north.11

10. Charles Hamlin was a much-admired Colby professor of chemistry and natural history and later curator of paleontology at Harvard. As a promoter of the war memorial, his credentials as a patriot were unquestioned. Twenty years before, he and a classmate had been temporarily suspended for making “a great disturbance during recitation hours” in observance of the Fourth of July.

11. Waterville’s monument, honoring fallen soldiers from town and from the renamed College, was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1876.
GROWING UP

The power of the great river took Waterville into the Industrial Revolution fifty years before the era even had a name. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, commerce shifted away from a declining big lumber industry to the promising future of manufacturing and its accompanying expansion of retail trade. The town, exploding with new immigrants, became a city, and the University branched out to find new students by establishing preparatory “fitting schools” and opening its doors to women.

In the early 1790s Vassalboro farmer Nehemiah Getchell and his son-in-law, Asa Redington, let it known they planned to power a sawmill by putting a dam into the ferocious Kennebec. Neighbors thought they had lost their senses, but in 1794, when the short dam from the west bank to Leeman Island was completed and their mill was built, the tiny settlement found the independence to separate from Winslow and leapfrog closer to the front of the line among the most promising communities in the District of Maine.

Seventy-six years later, George Phillips bought shore and power rights from some fifty owners on both banks and formed the Ticonic Water Power and Manufacturing Company. Their dam crossed the entire river, and when it was done its investors were nearly bankrupt. Reuben Dunn ’67, maker of scythes and axes in West Waterville, bailed out the struggling company and held on until 1873, when Amos Lockwood came to save the shareholders. Lockwood, a well-known developer of textile manufacturing, paid the debtors and proceeded to build a cotton mill with 33,000 spindles. In nine years the Lockwood Company built a second, larger mill (55,000 spindles) below the falls. By the turn of the century more than 1,300 of the town’s 10,000 souls were engaged in making cloth.

The dam and the mill brought its own river of new enterprise. The smattering of manufacturing, begun years before at the cascades on Emerson Stream, quickly expanded, and new mills began to operate east along the smaller waterway and up and down the river. Early mills had sawed logs and ground grain; now waterpower was used to card wool and make chairs, bedposts, wagon hubs, friction matches, toothpicks, shovel handles, and more.

Established merchants saw profits grow. Jacob Peavy of Prussia, a maker and seller of men’s clothing, soon had houses in Boston and New York. Brothers Arthur and Charles Alden (descendents of Pilgrims John and Priscilla) began selling clocks and watches in 1854. The German-born Gallert brothers, Mark and David, opened a boot and shoe business in 1862. E. D. Noyes was
selling cast-iron cookstoves from his foundry on Chaplin Street in 1867, and the following year blacksmith Levi Boothby joined with his son Frederick to sell insurance. The Waterville Savings Bank opened its doors in 1869 with Christian Knauff, a German dry goods merchant, as a founding director. Frederick Pooler of Saint George, Canada, opened a thriving grocery business in the south of town.

By the 1870s Waterville had outgrown West Waterville. Squabbles and competition over future development led to a petition for division, approved at a town meeting by a vote of 227 to 130. The Maine legislature granted the request February 26, 1873, and the divorce was final. West Waterville carried her original name for ten years before changing it to Oakland on March 10, 1883, the same year that the Cascade Woolen Mill, soon to be a major employer with more than one hundred hands, was incorporated.

The boom served to bolster the University as well. President Champlin spoke at the celebration of its 1870 semicentennial and declared Colby “fairly founded.” But, he said, merely having the money to sustain things was not enough. “To stand still in such an age and country as this is tantamount to going backward,” he said, seizing the moment to build even more. For two years the University had offered a Bachelor of Science degree without an adequate science facility, and Champlin urged trustees to remedy the situation at once. The next morning Gardner Colby and Maine governor Abner Coburn led other trustees in pledging enough to pay for the new building. It was given Coburn’s name. Adding to the luster of that day was a trustee vote to increase faculty salaries by a whopping 25 percent. Things were going very well indeed.

Despite the successes, the enrollment needed a boost, and the following year, on August 1, 1871, the board appointed a committee to recommend action on a proposed resolution: “That the advantages of the course of studies pursued in this university be open to young women on the same terms of admission as to young men.” Led by Champlin, the appointed group reported an affirmative recommendation that very afternoon, and it was swiftly adopted. When the new freshmen arrived the following month, a bright local woman was among them. Mary Caffrey Low had matriculated at the Classical Institute in town. In scholarly promise she was more than a match for her classmates. Two future Maine Supreme Court justices, Leslie Cornish and Henry Hudson, were among her Colby classmates. She beat out Cornish for valedictorian honors in 1875, and men began to call her admission “the mistake of ’71.” Issues of fairness and equality may have had something to do with the step to coeducation (the first among all the former men’s colleges in New Eng-
but the case was also helped by the need to increase revenues. Neither did it hurt the women's cause that the governor's niece, Louise Coburn, was next in line as a female candidate. She joined three other women in the class that entered in 1873.

Four lone women did not do much to improve the enrollment, and that year, the last of his presidency, Champlin again teamed with Coburn, this time to affiliate the University with a Maine fitting school or two, so as to ensure a steady annual stream of students. First, the struggling preparatory schools needed propping up. Champlin, who admired the tiny Classical Institute in Waterville, suggested to the Maine Baptist Education Society in Gray that the school be given a $50,000 endowment. Governor Coburn was the perfect choice to head a trustee committee charged with considering the matter, and it soon reported that Coburn himself would give the money on condition the same amount be raised for two additional fitting schools to be tied to the University. The Waterville Institute was named for Coburn, and supporters soon found the money to affiliate with Hebron and Houlton (Ricker) academies as well. Higgins Institute in Charleston was added later, creating a reliable system, which may have saved Colby again. Whether it did or not, it is certain that the infusion of new money and the assurance of college placement for their graduates saved the struggling academies.

The College's first black graduate, Adam Simpson Green, took his degree in 1887. Green, like many of his classmates, went on to a career in the ministry. He was nearly alone as a black man in a very white town. Another was Samuel Osborne, a former slave brought to Waterville from Virginia in 1865 by a young Colby graduate, Colonel Stephen Fletcher '59. Osborne arrived with two young children and later, under the auspices of the Baptist Church, was able to bring his father, his wife, and their baby child as well. Osborne's father worked as a janitor at the college. When he died, Samuel took his place and remained a Colby fixture for nearly forty years. In the case of Osborne, the Colby literature is replete with stories giving evidence to the sad fact that while he and his family were well treated by many at the College and within his adopted church, he was also often demeaned and ridiculed. Students were especially harsh, mocking his manner of speech and imitating his plain though insightful homilies. He was a kind and decent man, and endured the taunting with grace.

Racial integration, if uncomfortable for some, was on the whole unremarkable, in large measure because of the small number of black students.

12. Colby's Maine sister college, Bates, was coeducational from the time of its abolitionist founding in 1855.
who enrolled. It was the joining of the sexes that raised the most eyebrows. Colby’s official equal status of women continued only until 1890, when growing uneasiness over the academic dominance of women students—in the admissions process and in the classrooms—encouraged trustees to abandon the coeducational designation and create what would be called, though never fully achieved, a coordinate university.

Although Colby was unusual in having retreated from coeducation to coordination, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a number of institutions chose coordination as a means of bolstering enrollment without suffering the slings and arrows of their predominately male alumni bodies. Harvard had Radcliffe as early as 1879, Tulane opened Newcomb in 1886, followed by Barnard for Columbia (1889), and Pembroke for Brown (1891). Kenyon opened a coordinate college for women as late as 1965, but like Colby, declined to give it a separate name. At Colby and generally elsewhere, the systems became outdated and the distinctions all but vanished long before they were officially abolished.

Waterville’s first twenty-seven electric streetlamps were turned on in 1874, illuminating shops along downtown streets. One of the first three buildings to be “electrified” was the W. B. Arnold Company, a hardware store at 109 Main. Arnold, who in 1876 bought out his only partner, Nathaniel Meader ’63, wore many hats, and in the fashion of his descendants and namesakes was a leader in community service. Among his many gifts were books to begin a public library.13

A telephone line was soon open to Portland and within a few years the rapidly growing Maine Central Railroad began looking for a site for locomotive and car shops. Portland wanted them, but Waterville officials promised a twenty-year property tax exemption and won them over. As a further enticement, citizens joined in a gift of land adjoining the tracks—and very near the campus. With all its growth, Waterville finally convinced itself to become a city. The legislature had offered city status as early as 1883, but citizens voted 344 to 223 to turn it down. After a bit of tinkering with the proposed charter and a good deal more discussion, in March 1887 voters finally agreed. The legislature made it official on January 23, 1888.

That spring, an outbreak of typhoid fever prompted construction of the first of many new trappings of a modern city. Frank Johnson, who would one

13. Andrew Carnegie completed Arnold’s job in 1902 with a donation of $20,000 for a new free library on Elm Street.
day become the College president, recalled working his freshman winter of 
1887–88, stoking the wood fires and lugging buckets of water from the “college 
pump” to his South College residence. In the summer the well was abandoned 
and the spigots of a new municipal water system, taking water from Messalonskee Stream, were turned on. The College was at the head of the line among 
the new customers of the Maine Water Company.

The stream was polluted with sewage from both Waterville and Oakland, and the typhoid outbreaks continued. Forty local people died dur­
ing an epidemic in 1902–1903, and Dr. J. F. Hill ’81 urged the construc­
tion of an entirely new water system. Local attorney Harvey Doane Eaton ’87 had conceived the idea of multitown service districts, ap­
proved by the Maine legislature in 1899. The Kennebec Water District, 
established in 1904, was soon emulated throughout the country. It was Eaton who also suggested tapping the clean water of nearby China Lake. 
An 8.5-mile trench was dug and the long pipe was laid in the winter of 
1904–1905. The project cost was $25,000.

At the close of the decade Charles Redington (grandson of the first dam 
builder, Asa) and his son Frank opened a furniture store on Silver Street and, 
with ready access to wooden caskets, became undertakers as well. On Western 
Avenue the Ursuline Sisters founded Mount Merici, an academy for girls 
(1889). Joseph Grondin was selling both stoves and furniture. William Levine, 
a Russian immigrant and itinerant clothing peddler, took his team and wagon 
off the road and opened a store at the corner of Ticonic and Maple streets 
(1891), where a small Jewish community was gathering. In ten years they built 
a synagogue, Beth Israel, and twenty years later Levine paid off the mortgage. 

The first electric cars ran up and down from Fairfield in 1892, and the pulp 
and paper manufacturing giant Hollingsworth & Whitney began to build a 
new mill on the east bank of the river in Winslow. The biggest timber had al­
ready been taken from the north woods, but the paper mills at Madison and 
Winslow had an insatiable appetite for the smaller trees, rafted down the Ken­
nebec each spring in great droves that covered the water from shore to shore.

A Waterville man, Alvin Lombard, made the wood move even faster. In 1901 
he was granted a patent for a steam log hauler, as odd-looking as it was effec­
tive. With tracks that negotiated snow and stumpage, the Lombard tractor 
hauled sleds with as much as three hundred tons of pulp out of the woods and
to the yards and rivers. For a mile or more, the riverfront was filling up with industry. The Riverview Worsted Mill (later the Wyandotte) was built near the river north of Temple Street, and by 1900 employed some three hundred workers turning out top-of-the-line wool worsted men’s clothing on eighty modern looms.

The new buildings, in town and on the campus, required millions of bricks, and they were locally made as well. The abundant clay and sand made brick making a small industry even before the river mills began. A new brickyard was opened below the Ticonic Bridge when the Lockwood mill was constructed; and another yard was later built on College Avenue, near Fairfield. Proctor & Flood had been making bricks on the avenue since 1892, and in about 1900, Proctor joined with Bowie to make more than a million bricks a year at a new plant on the corner by the bridge in Winslow.

With all of the new foot traffic between Waterville homes and the paper mill across the river, in 1899 the Ticonic Bridge Company commissioned Proctor & Bowie to make the piers for a short-cut pedestrian bridge at the foot of Temple Street. The 6 ft. by 576 ft. span was built on the ice in the winter of 1900-1901 and many locals watched doubtfully during the spring thaw, expecting it to be washed away. They were wrong by a year. It went downriver in the awful floods in the spring of 1902 and was rebuilt a year later at double the original price. To recover the cost, the charter of the bridge company allowed its owners to charge a two-cent toll, a fee structure that gave the bridge its name.

All of the riverfront development was good for the new city, then barely twenty years old. It was good for Colby too—except that on the campus things were getting a bit tight, especially for a place that called itself a university. When Colby made his naming gift, the title “university” was not unusual for a college without graduate study. Perhaps some thought that with its new riches it would, in fact, become a university. More likely it simply seemed a grander name, and it stuck for more than three decades until the institution, by then eighty-six years old, changed its name for the fourth and final time. Nathaniel Butler Jr. ’73 arrived as Colby’s twelfth president in 1896. He came directly from the University of Chicago, and he knew a university when he saw

14. The tractors slowly replaced oxen and horses; in time eighty-three of them were used in the woods of Maine, New Hampshire, and Canada. Later converted to gasoline power, they served until the early 1930s when diesel trucks replaced them. In the meantime, Lombard’s invention was borrowed for the development of military tanks and bulldozers.
one. Colby was no university. He immediately pressed for a name change and on January 25, 1899, the Maine legislature obliged. Colby was again a college.

Whether a university or a college, the campus, tiny to begin with, was getting squeezed. The noise and smell of economic success were challenging the lectures of the faculty and the earnest concentration of students, and the once-pristine river was filling up with pulp. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the College found itself on an island: a growing business district to the south; a trolley line and railroad with its belching coal-fired steam engines to the west; ironworks and a locomotive shop and its clanging roundhouse switch to the north; and, looming across the river in the east, a wonderful new paper mill, stinking of sulfur.

COMING AND GOING

Despite the bustle, at the turn of the century the city was still an isolated place in the backwater of the nation. Trolleys connected the nearby farming villages of Oakland and Fairfield, and trains and newspapers were the only ties to the rest of the world. Horses drew sprinklers along tree-lined streets to quiet the dust in summer and rollers to pack snow in winter. College students found social life on Main Street, gathering at Kelly’s bookstore and along the marble fountain at Hager’s for 15¢ ice cream cones. Silent movies were new and exciting. Without fanfare, Waterville’s population slowly expanded in still another direction with the arrival of a community of citizens from southern Lebanon. Everything was in order. The future looked bright. Then, suddenly, the peace was gone.

The Lebanese called themselves Syrian. The newcomers were in fact from that region of Greater Syria that only later became part of Lebanon. Besides, Americans knew little of Lebanon, but they knew something of Syria. Like the French, the Lebanese came to find work and escape poverty. Unlike the French, they were running from tyranny as well. They were Maronite Catholics, from the Eastern Church, Christians for years in conflict with the Moslem Druze and then defeated and repressed by the Ottomans. Life for them became even more difficult when the Suez Canal opened in 1869 and traders passed them by. A national famine followed, and by 1900 more than

15. From recollections of Marjorie Meader Burns ’14 (honorary M.A., 1948) who, under the name of Marjorie Mills, was a newswriter (Boston Herald, 1916–66) and radio commentator (New England Radio Network 1923–58), and whose many cookbooks remain popular classics.
100,000—fully a quarter of the population—left Greater Syria for the industrial cities of Europe and the United States.

Abraham Joseph had opened a dry goods store in Waterville as early as 1887, but most Lebanese came later to work in the mills, settling themselves north of The Plains, near the river along Front and Union Streets at a place called Head of Falls. The men came first. Hardworking and thrifty, they sent paychecks to their families until there was money enough for them to come and live together.

They organized a Maronite parish community (1927) and later built Saint Joseph's Church (1951), where masses were sung in Arabic. The church provided a great deal more than religious services, serving as a community center for the close-knit families and perpetuating their remarkable heritage. From the beginning the Lebanese, like the French, contributed a great deal to Waterville, not the least of which was the introduction of new foods—kibbie and koosa, falafel and laban, baklava, tabouleh and fatayer—dishes that soon altered the dietary preferences of the entire community. In later years, Sittu (grandmother) George opened a bakery on Union Street and, unless the humidity was high or the breeze hard to the west, the aroma of flat bread baking in her ovens mercifully subdued the sharp smell of sulfite wafting across the Kennebec.

Except for the divisions of religion, the eclectic community of French Roman Catholics, Lebanese Maronite Catholics, Russian Jews, and European Protestants of every flavor got along well, working shoulder to shoulder in the mills if not sharing schools, and mixing along the shops of Main Street if not in the neighborhoods of town. Many of them were sitting together with the College students in March 1917, when former President William Howard Taft spoke at the local Opera House. His message of patriotism and warnings of an inevitable war so stirred the editors of the Echo they promptly urged the formation of a campus military company. Its first drill was held April 4. Two days later Congress declared war on the imperial German government.

A resolution passed in chapel endorsed President Woodrow Wilson's action and pledged support "for the protection of our seamen and our people in the prosecution of their peaceful and legitimate errands on the high seas." By mid-May nearly a quarter of the men had enlisted and gone. The College opened late in the fall of 1917, in deference to farmers needing help in gathering crops. When the first semester began in October, two campus buildings were closed for lack of coal. By spring, half the men were in the service.

Over the summer of 1918 the conscription age was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen; when the College fall term began, again late, President Arthur Roberts announced military training would be compulsory for all of the now draft-eligible freshmen. In order to preserve the colleges while developing its
armed forces, the government established the Student Army Training Corps (SATC). All fit male college students were put into military service and under military instruction. The men’s division became a “war college.” By government order the College divided the academic year into three sessions, including the summer, and the men were meant to receive the equivalent of a full college year in each of the three “semesters.”

The Twelfth Cavalry was in charge. Its officers had headquarters in Chemical Hall. President Roberts no longer had much authority over the men’s side of things, and would bide his time at the fieldhouse, watching the Colby Military Company drill. The chapel became a study hall and the gymnasium, a mess hall. Under order of the War Department, fraternities were suspended. “Considering that fraternity activity and military discipline are incompatible,” the order read, “the Department deems it for the best interests of the Service that the operation of fraternities in institutions where units of SATC are established shall be suspended for the period of the present emergency.” The YMCA took the Alpha Tau Omega (ATO) fraternity house and managed it, under military control, as a dormitory for soldiers.

Evan Shearman ’22 (honorary D.D., 1972) later recounted life as a SATC member, mostly raking leaves, shining boots, cleaning his long Russian rifle, and drilling on the ballfield. Security was of first importance. Shearman told of one morning in the early fall of 1918 when Prexy Roberts appeared on the walkway in front of Chemical Hall, headed for his office. Thaddeus Tilton ’20 was on guard duty and challenged him. “Who is there?” the young officer called out. “The president of the College,” Roberts replied. “You may not enter,” Tilton said, saying he had orders to admit no one to the campus but the milkman and the grocery man. Shearman wrote: “No protestation of the hearty head of the College, who had been accustomed to personally running his school in every detail, could shake Tilton or change his rifle from the port position. Nor would he call the corporal of the guard. And so the head of the college turned back toward his house, himself a victim of the war, made subordinate to a second lieutenant.”

Harvey Eaton ’87, director of the local exemption board, led the induction ceremonies for the entire corps in October. President Wilson sent a message reminding the students they had pledged, as had their forefathers, “your lives,
your fortune and your sacred honor to the freedom of humanity.” A month later it was over. The November 11, 1918, armistice prompted a first and last SATC parade, and there were nightlong bonfire celebrations in the city. The local Sentinel received news of the final surrender at 2:45 A.M. on November 12 and ran a special edition with a headline proclaiming:

The Greatest Day in History of Waterville

Before dawn the streets were filled with gleeful citizens beating on pots and pans and burning effigies of the kaiser. Miraculously no one was hurt, but the large gatherings were blamed for rekindling a deadly influenza that plagued the region through the fall. The College first quarantined the campus, then sent the women home. Two students died, both members of the soon-to-be-abolished corps. Before the epidemic was over more than five hundred had died in Maine.

Not a great deal of learning went on through the twenty months of war. College officials worried that many students might never come back, especially those whose unusual education had been paid for the government. Roberts wrote to them, pleading for their return. He promised financial help and, thanks to local merchants who provided them, part-time jobs in town. It worked. The College reopened in January with 364 students, a few more than there had been when classes began in 1917. The College devised ways to allow veterans to receive academic advancement and credit for their war service. In all there were 124 students in SATC, joining more than five hundred of their classmates and alumni on active duty or in supporting organizations. Eighteen of them died in service.

Three years later, in 1920, Colby celebrated its centennial. It might have been observed on the anniversary of the granting of the charter, but in 1913 the College was in no shape to celebrate. It might have marked the date of first classes in 1918, but the nation was at war. Instead, the centennial marked the date of the receipt of its charter from the new State of Maine in 1820.

Commencement a year later coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the admission of women, and the graduation of 1922 was on the centennial of the first graduation. Ceremonies included the rededication of the Boardman Memorial Willows, planted each year since 1832 to honor alumni who had died and making a path to the river. The trees had begun to die, and students joined President Roberts in planting new twigs. Mary Low Carver wrote a special hymn, and the esteemed professor of Latin, Julian Taylor, gave a stirring address in which he spoke of the need for quiet space on any college campus. It presaged a growing threat to Colby:
The practical man is here with his scales and his measuring rod to tell us exactly how much excellent pulpwood these trees would yield, and the scholar's voice of protest is not easy to hear amid the thunder of railroad trains and the clatter of mills and factories, yet those of us here in this group will join our voice to his. Let them build, we say, their laboratories and their vocational workshops, but let them leave to the scholar this sylvan corner of the old college for his books, his meditations, his mysteries, and his Boardman Willows.

**TIME TO MOVE**

Franklin Winslow Johnson was sixty years old when he became Colby's fifteenth president in the inauspicious year 1929. He was well suited to move an entire college, an idea that was on his mind even before he took the job. Every inch a Maine man, at 5'8", with dark, deep-set eyes and a square jaw, he had the appearance of a bulldog. He had another characteristic of the breed as well: when he got a bone in his teeth, he wouldn't let go.

Johnson was born in the western Maine town of Jay and schooled at Wilton Academy, a Bates College preparatory school of Calvinist Baptist leanings. It was an early sign of independence when in the fall of 1887 he chose to enter Colby, tilted toward the Free Baptists.

His first job was as principal of the high school in the remote Canadian border town of Calais, where he stayed long enough to fall in love and marry a local woman, Carolyn Lord. In 1894 the couple moved to Waterville where he became principal of Coburn Classical Institute, spending eleven years before being lured west to head Morgan Park High School in Chicago. In 1907 he signed on as principal of the prestigious University of Chicago High School where he was a colleague and cautious disciple of the controversial innovator in secondary education, John Dewey. During World War I Johnson served as a major in the Army Medical Service, and afterward he followed Dewey to Columbia University where he taught at Teachers College and gained notice as a consultant. In 1920, Colby invited him to join its board of trustees.

In the spring of 1928, while Johnson was still at Columbia, colleagues at Teachers College were hired to staff a Maine higher education survey, conducted by the Maine Development Commission. Johnson was a friend of Harold Boardman, University of Maine president and instigator of the study. Boardman worried that higher education in Maine was developing helter-skelter, without attention to the state's economic needs. Boardman went to
Governor Ralph Owen Brewster, who in turn convinced the commission to fund a study.

At the time, Colby was without a president. When President Arthur Roberts fell ill in autumn 1927, he appointed a faculty committee to run the college while he took a medical leave. He was gone nearly two years. In 1929, while in New Jersey seeking a cure, he died. Known alternately as “Old Rob” (even as a young president) and as “Prexy Roberts,” Colby’s first nonpreacher president had served for nineteen years, the longest tenure of any of his predecessors, and was admired by generations of students and the people of town. Hundreds of mourners lined the Waterville railway station platform when his body was returned for burial.

Trustees didn’t have to look long or far for his replacement. Johnson was well known, respected, and already in their midst. His appointment in November was greeted with enthusiasm all around. He took office in June 1929. His wife Carolyn had died only weeks before Roberts’s death, and his inauguration was a somber, private affair at the president’s house on College Avenue. The ceremony was further dampened by the concurrent public release of the Maine Higher Education Survey Report. The survey was the work of an advisory committee whose members came from the four state university colleges, the private colleges (Bates, Bowdoin, and Colby), the normal schools, and the junior colleges of Westbrook and Ricker. Johnson knew most of its members, including the Colby representative, board chair Herbert Wadsworth; and Bowdoin’s president, Kenneth Sills, to whom Johnson often turned for advice.

The report included a detailed examination of each of the institutions: physical plant, teaching staff, organization and administration of instruction, size and composition of student bodies and alumni, and certain aspects of the financial affairs. In the measurement of the physical plant, Colby got 377 out of a possible score of one thousand. The physical plant at Bates was declared “complete enough,” although the report fretted about an encroaching Lewiston and urged trustees to “obtain control of the additional land surrounding

16. A year later he married Imogene Hall, the widow of his Colby roommate, Dana Hall. The Johnsons and the Halls had been friends for years, spending summer vacations at their nearby homes in Robbinston, Maine. The new couple moved into the Elmwood Hotel while the old president’s house at 33 College Avenue (once the home of Nathaniel Boutelle) was being renovated. The pipe-smoking president-elect became a deacon of the First Baptist Church, and he and his wife were regulars in the pew reserved for Colby presidents for more than a century.

17. Bates had 618; Bowdoin, 644; the University of Maine, 567.

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the present campus.” The survey team had visited Bowdoin during a heavy shower and the road in front of Moulton Union was “a small lake.” The report recommended improved drainage, but overall found the oldest of Maine’s colleges “favorably located on a desirable and adequate site.”

The assessment of Colby’s site was complete in its damning:

The campus is located on a small plot of land bounded on three sides by railroad tracks, the station, and railroad yards, and on the other by the Kennebec River, with one of the largest pulp mills in the State directly across the river from the campus—near enough to cause annoyance from smoke and unpleasant odors. The prevailing winds come from the direction of the railroad yards and shops, and there are always smoke and soot laden to such an extent that it is practically impossible to keep buildings or equipment clean. Added to this, there is the noise of the trains, and the danger from crossing the tracks. The above list of disadvantages is made even more impressive when it is realized that the present central campus contains only about 28 acres and that a college like Colby should have from 60 to 75 acres as a minimum for the development of a modern college program of activities. The worst feature is that the possibilities for expansion are shut off by the river and the railroad.

Concern about trains was not exaggerated. Civil War historian John Pullen ’35 (honorary M.A., 1958) later wrote that “west winds blew clouds of smoke and soot through the campus; east winds brought sulphurous fumes from the paper mill across the Kennebec.” Sleeping in the “ram pastures” (attics) of North and South College, Pullen said, “we were often lulled to slumber by the monotonous thundering rumble of a potato train (it must have been five or six miles long) that went through about midnight.” The trains, of course, kept the “boys and girls” on opposite sides of the tracks, making for many anxious foot races to beat the locomotive to the College Avenue crossing.

The assessment of campus buildings was no more cheerful. It found no evidence “that a plan of any kind has existed for the future development of the college's building program.” Commissioners worried that six of the ten buildings were more than fifty years old (two were more than one hundred) and poorly maintained; that there was no central heating plant and the individual
furnaces increased the fire hazard, not only from the old equipment but also from the coal stored in the basements. The negative marks piled up: poor artificial lighting, inadequate ventilation in the toilets, no drinking fountains, not enough baths or showers, not enough telephones, too few faculty offices, inadequate athletic facilities, and on and on.

Unmentioned, but still among the stark deficiencies of the old campus was the lack of dining facilities for men. The women ate at Foss Hall, but from the beginning the men fended for themselves. Many took their meals at the YMCA behind the railway station, and at the tiny “Quick ’n’ Dirty” north of the tracks. Private boardinghouses had sprung up near the campus, including one operated by “Ma Frost” on Center Street, near the post office, where Colby men were served family-style meals for seventy-five cents.

The conclusions and recommendations for Colby reflected the despair of the surveyors. It began simply enough: “It is difficult to make recommendations for Colby College.” That said, the section went on to make a rather startling one:

It is the opinion of the surveyors that its present site and present physical plant are so far below the desirable standards for a college with Colby’s standing that the site should be changed before any more capital is invested in the present plant, most of which has given worthy service for a long period. It is a matter of only a relatively few years until more than half of the present buildings will have to be replaced. It will cost no more to build these buildings on a new site than on the present one. . . . The recommendation is, then, that Colby College should move to a larger and more desirable site.

The popular notion, then and later, was that the report came as a stunning surprise, that it was the single trigger of discussions about a possible move. In fact, well before the report became public there were many who knew Colby was suffocating and felt the College should pick up and leave. Johnson was one of them. He had become a “move or die” adherent well before the survey was even conducted, and the surveyors must certainly have been influenced by his views.

The director of the study was O. S. Lutes, chairman of the Department of Education at the University of Maine, who assigned much of the legwork to a young graduate student, Ermo Scott. Lutes was anxious not to offend or sur-

18. Scott became a well-known Maine educator, eventually serving as president of the University of Maine at Farmington.
prise Colby officials with the harsh findings, and when a first draft of the report was written he sent Scott on the train to Waterville to share it with Johnson and Dean Ernest Marriner '13. Johnson read the report in silence before passing it to Marriner. When the dean finished reading, Johnson said: “Tell Dr. Lutes to publish it just as it stands. Here is our first factual evidence which justifies our new campus.”

As a trustee Johnson had witnessed firsthand the plight of the College: one thousand students cramped on a tiny campus, plagued by the new economy, and no place to go. As early as 1927 he and his good friend Herbert Philbrick '97, a dean at Northwestern, had talked about moving. Trustee chairman Herbert Wadsworth '92 was initially not interested in moving at all. Philbrick was the first to approach him with the idea, and four months before taking office Johnson himself privately broached the subject to his new boss.

The moment the survey report became public Johnson wrote Philbrick (May 15, 1929): “Everything seems to be set for presenting the proposal to the trustees in June to move the College to a more adequate location.” The letter went on to reveal that Johnson had gotten his fellow trustee and good friend Walter Wyman to begin to secure options on land on a ridge between Waterville and Oakland, a place called Mayflower Hill. It seemed Johnson not only wanted to move the College, he also knew precisely where he wanted it to go.

Wyman was the perfect stalking-horse. A well-known entrepreneur, his gathering of purchase options would have raised no eyebrows. He and Harvey D. Eaton had parlayed a small, local electric power firm into what became Central Maine Power Company in 1910. Wyman put together nearly twice as much land as was eventually purchased. He tied up 1,378 acres at an option cost of $166,000. They encompassed all of what was known as Mayflower Hill, and extended to Pray Field on the town side of the Messalonskee, site of the annual circuses when P. T. Barnum came to town.

Except in the inner circle, Johnson kept his thoughts to himself. First there was the matter of getting a majority of the board to agree. Then there was the court of public opinion. It wouldn’t be easy. There was a great fondness for

19. Philbrick was a Waterville native; his family ran the Iron Works. Years after the move he recalled that during a 1927 visit he and his wife were sitting on the veranda of the Waterville Country Club, and “the beauty and open space all around us led us to say in chorus ‘Colby must have more room,’ and with it was the resolve to help bring it about.” Philbrick was a new member of the Colby board. Board chair Wadsworth later said he would have opposed Philbrick’s election had he known the man was a proponent of moving the College.
the old campus, no matter how crowded and decrepit. And even if there could be general support, there was still the matter of finding the money. The College had only recently beaten the bushes for two new buildings. Alumnae Hall, a recreation building for the growing women’s division, was just opened across College Avenue, and a new fieldhouse, down a steep bank near the river, was set to open in the fall. The decade before, Prexy Robert’s Centennial Fund had scraped to raise a half-million, and the current development effort wasn’t going well at all. There was barely enough to finish the new buildings.

Despite his zeal for moving the College, Johnson had little enthusiasm for raising the money. In discussions with trustees about assuming the presidency, he made it clear he planned to devote his time to making educational improvements, not passing the hat, and in November 1928 he inveigled the board to pass a resolution embracing that very notion: “It is agreed the main efforts of Dr. Johnson shall be directed to the building up of Colby as an educational institution rather than to canvassing funds for endowment and equipment.” It was a promise soon breached.

The trustees met on June 14, 1929, the eve of Johnson’s inauguration. Armed with the survey report, Johnson presented his proposal. At the same time, he revealed that Wyman was securing land options. Board members listened carefully as Johnson pressed his case. They could agree only to take a pause while Wadsworth named a special committee of six, charged with making a recommendation on the central question of a move. In July committee members took a walking tour of the old campus and then, with Wyman as the guide, trekked the length of Gilman Street and up the dirt road that continued beyond the intersection of the First Rangeway to have a look at this place called Mayflower Hill. After the tour, the group adjourned to the Elmwood Hotel, where only Wyman and Philbrick voiced any willingness to move. (Johnson would surely have been a third, but he was laid up and sore from an automobile accident while vacationing down east.) After a long discussion, the two eventually convinced the others to recommend a move.

Trustees received the recommendation at a special meeting of the board in August, and Johnson asked for another delay. Wyman needed more time to assemble land purchase options, and Johnson needed to see if he could begin to build a public consensus in favor of a move. General support would be needed if they had any hope of raising $3 million, the estimated cost of an entirely new campus. Two months later, on October 29, the stock market crashed, and the nation slid into the Great Depression.

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SAVED FOR WATerville

When the stunning news began to spread, many didn’t believe it. Move the entire college? A preposterous idea. The stage was set for 1930 to be a most suspenseful and chaotic year. The furor began in April when Johnson received a letter from William H. Gannett, publisher of four Maine newspapers, including the local Waterville Morning Sentinel, inviting Colby trustees to have a look at a possible new site in Augusta. If they liked it, Gannett said, they could have it, and to sweeten the deal he’d give some relocation money as well.

As a young man William Gannett bought the formula for a soft drink, similar to the popular Moxie, and claimed it could cure all sorts of troubles. He named it Oxien, bottled it on Cony Street in Augusta, and with a team and covered wagon, visited the fall fairs, selling the stuff at a nickel a glass. He later found a Boston manufacturer who made the preparation in lozenge form, and he hired agents to sell Oxien Health Tonic Tablets through a brisk mail-order business. In 1921 he took some of his earnings and bought two Portland newspapers.

Long before, in 1892, Gannett had purchased the Milliken Farm on Western Avenue in Augusta, and later built an estate, naming it Ganneston Park. He was seventy-six when he offered the park to Colby and gave the publishing business to his son, Guy Patterson Gannett. He most likely wanted to catch a prize for his hometown, and it is also possible his proposal was invited. Architect Jens Frederick Larson had developed a concept for a new Colby campus even before the decision was made to move. He recalled passing through Augusta before 1930. “I noticed a hill of large acreage opposite the airport,” he wrote. “Later I found out that this land was owned by William H. Gannett.” When Larson was commissioned to move ahead with plans for a new campus he remembered the Augusta property. “I suggested that an approach be made to him [Gannett],” Larson said.

It is likely Larson made his suggestion to Franklin Johnson. Whether Johnson or anyone else approached Gannett is not known. Still, the president was pleased by the attempt to lure Colby downriver. Talk of the offer would affirm that the College was serious about moving, and it might provoke a counteroffer in Waterville, where Johnson wanted the College to stay. Gannett made his offer official on June 9, 1930. The College could have the land provided it raised $3.5 million in moving money in three years. The publisher hinted he would help with the matching money as well. It was a magnificent gesture, and one that could not be taken lightly. Four days later, the trustees met and unanimously approved the special committee’s recommendation with a terse
resolution: “it is the sense of this meeting that the College, as soon as means can be obtained and it is feasible, be moved to a new and more adequate location.”

News of the trustee decision and the Gannett offer hit at the same time, and the reaction was powerful. Around town people quickly tied the Colby president to a conspiracy with the Augusta publisher. The Sentinel cried out: “Keep Colby, Move Johnson”; and among alumni and in the local homes, shops, and mills the very idea of moving the College at all—never mind out of town—seemed utter nonsense. They called it “Johnson’s folly.”

The president’s silence and his determination to keep the Gannett offer on the table had the predictable effect. Within days a Waterville citizens’ committee was formed to see what could be done to keep Colby. J. F. Hill and Herbert Emery were leaders, as was a man with great credibility both in town and at the College, Herbert C. Libby ’02. A Waterville native, Libby had served as the city’s mayor, taught public speaking, and had been Prexy Roberts’s assistant. He was now editor of the College alumni magazine, the Alumnus, which he unabashedly used to trumpet the Waterville case: “The immediately important step is for Waterville to organize her citizens into a large group of Friends of Colby,” he wrote, “and for each to pledge so generously as to convince the governing body of the College and its 4,000 graduates that the home folks deeply desire to keep Colby within its sacred walls.”

Between June and September the Citizens Committee held fifteen meetings, and pledged to raise $100,000 and give it to the College if it would stay in town. In the meantime, the College launched its own $500,000 campaign for the development of a new campus, wherever it was going to be. General Herbert M. Lord ’84, director of the U.S. Bureau of the Budget, was general chairman. (His selection by Wadsworth was regarded as a prediction of success, given that he had “more experience than any other man in the country in handling huge sums of money.”)

With the time for a location decision drawing near, the committee called for a final meeting of citizens and took a full-page advertisement in the Sentinel. “Make this the largest meeting ever held in Waterville,” the ad said. “Don’t depend on the other fellow, do it yourself. Sickness is the only excuse any citizen of Waterville should have not to attend.” The paper’s editorial page picked up the cry: “For a city of the size and resources of Waterville this is really a tremendous task and so it’s well that every effort is being made to make it possible. It will need everything every citizen can do and is a real test of mettle and loyalty. There’s no place for slackers or whiners in this situation.”

More than one thousand gathered at the Opera House. Redington’s Fu-
general Home loaned extra chairs. Bands played, and the glee club of the American Legion Auxiliary, “dressed in natty uniforms,” sat at the edge of the stage. The Hon. H. C. Marden presided: “If it is the sentiment of this gathering that by moving to Augusta they can transpose the willows, recreate Memorial Hall, recreate the new and old North and South buildings, replace the athletic field with its invisible monuments of bitter but friendly battles, then we will step aside because we respect the will of the majority,” Marden said. “But if it is the sentiment of this gathering that Colby will stay with new support and a chance to prosper on its native soil, you know that Colby can and will stay.”

Dr. Hill took the podium to explain that the organizing committee hoped to educate the people as to the seriousness of the situation, secure pledges of support, engage Colby alumni, find land options in Waterville, and finally “present to the Board of Trustees the moral claims that Waterville has upon the College so that the trustees will be slow indeed to pull up the roots of a 100-year-old institution and endanger its future growth by planting it in foreign soil.”

Mayor F. Harold Dubord ’03 made the longest speech by far. He said people already knew his sentimental reasons for keeping Colby, but he wanted to give some practical ones. He described the negative economic impact of Colby leaving town. He said local bankers agreed property values would depreciate 25 to 30 percent and, although Colby was exempt from property taxes, the exodus of faculty and staff would leave “empty rents and empty houses.” His economics lesson painted a scenario of the need for an “unprecedented increase in taxes” because if Colby moved “the city’s bonded debt would surely and quickly exceed its legal limit.”

Professor Libby then rose to make it clear he was no stalking-horse for Johnson. He said it was “nonsense” to think Johnson had made up his mind that the College should move to Augusta. Moreover, the eloquent speech teacher said, his presence on the stage was ample evidence Johnson had not “muzzled” the faculty to keep them from speaking out in favor of a Waterville site.

Last to speak was Professor Julian “Judy” Taylor who stunned the audience by offering the College his own landholdings in Waterville’s south end, a gravel pit adjacent to the cemetery. He said he was willing to buy abutting land (known locally as Poulin’s Point) owned by Dr. James Poulin Sr., for $10,000 and present the entire package if Colby would stay in Waterville. A banner headline on the front page of the next day’s Sentinel screamed: “Taylor Offers Colby Trustees Poulin Land.”

If Johnson was at the moment being much reviled, Taylor was much revered. His father, Daniel, was one of Waterville’s earliest white settlers. Then
in his sixty-second year as a teacher of Latin and literature, Taylor was an icon of the College. He was a student at Waterville Academy (later Coburn) in 1863 and was on hand to hear Ralph Waldo Emerson give the Waterville College commencement address. He was a freshman the following year when President Champlin announced the staggering gift of $50,000 from Gardner Colby. He had been at Colby since Colby was Colby.

Known affectionately as the “Old Roman,” he was convinced the College would remain in Waterville, and even consulted a lawyer who confirmed his hunch that a move to Augusta would entail a great deal more than trucking an entire college sixteen miles downriver. The state had granted a charter to Colby in Waterville, not Augusta. To move out of town would mean relinquishing that charter and starting over. Taylor was so sure this fact would cinch the deal he bet a man one thousand dollars to one cent Colby would remain where it started.

The Taylor property of about three hundred acres became known as the Kennebec-Messalonskee site. It was an improbable place, but with the Mayflower Hill site it added a second strong card to the hands of those who wanted Colby to stay put. A third local place was also soon considered: the Mountain Farm site, on the highland north of the city toward Fairfield. All of the properties were surveyed. Wyman had the options for Mayflower Hill in his pocket.

Local forces lobbied the trustees hard. In early November the chamber of commerce of Waterville and Winslow resolved with a flourish: “Realizing the inestimable value of Colby College to this community, and appreciating the great loss, educationally, spiritually, and financially, which would follow its removal from our city, we declare for ourselves and the organization we represent, our most hearty endorsement of the action of the Committee of One Hundred and of the city government in their purpose to raise $100,000 for Colby College in the event this institution removes to another site in this community.”

A second resolution scolded the city government. “The report that the city has voted $100,000 is not borne out by the record,” it said. “All that the city government has done is to pass a resolution unanimously endorsing the action of a citizens’ committee in underwriting the sum of $100,000 . . . it is doubtful whether the board of trustees of the College will regard this action of the city government as of any value whatever.” The signer of these resolutions was Caleb A. Lewis ’03, chamber president, manager of the local Sentinel, and a man to be reckoned with. A newsman of the old school, he ran the paper like a czar, making it a prime and powerful source of local news and opinion. Local activists knew it was well to have Lewis on their side in any fight. He was
quickly made a member of the executive committee of the Committee of One Hundred, divided into myriad subcommittees, each aimed at raising money or the promise of it. Lewis wrote a well-read column under the pseudonym Ima Wanderer and he used his space to cajole in the cause of keeping Colby. His publisher, the Gannetts, had owned the Sentinel since 1921, and Lewis's defiant stand against the offer in Augusta must have made Guy P. and his father cringe.

The Great Depression was underway. Many families had barely enough to live, never mind help buy land for a college. Every day there was news of a bank closing. Al Capone, a man with a better reputation for taking than giving, opened a soup kitchen in Chicago. In Waterville, even as the Sentinel touted the fundraising effort for Colby it was giving free space to anyone with any kind of a job to offer.

The College had become used to hard times. Peter Mills '34 remembered that era, when students got by on a mug of coffee for breakfast and a 45¢ supper at one of the boardinghouses along College Avenue. He recalled a student losing his job in the library for returning to college with a 1924 Chevrolet. If he could afford a car, he didn’t need work. When the job was given to someone who owned a raccoon coat worth more than the $25 Chevy, students signed a letter of protest.

Alongside the “work wanted” ads ran daily coupons for membership in the Friends of Colby: “A pledge of $2 to $10 is required for membership. Fill out and mail to F.A. Drummond, Waterville Savings Bank.” Letters to the editor alternatively cursed and praised the project—and Johnson. Welton Farrow, then superintendent of buildings and grounds at the College and later a bookshop proprietor on Main Street, wrote not once but several times, balefully claiming no one was listening to his obvious solution: move the Maine Central Railroad tracks and leave Colby alone.

Before the trustees met on November 21, the Committee of One Hundred pledged it would raise the $100,000 in a year’s time. The twenty-five members of the board, meeting at the president’s house on College Avenue, unanimously voted Colby would stay in town if the pledge could be met. Although trustees put on a solid front outside the meeting, the discussion in the Johnson living room was tense. There were several strong proponents of moving to Augusta who finally capitulated, in part because feelings were so strong a few
of them feared those who favored Waterville would go so far as to buy the old campus and continue with their own college.

The next morning’s headline in the Sentinel read:

**Colby Remains In Waterville**

**Citizens rejoice in Decision**

**Many Statements Are Prepared**

Johnson’s local stock began to rise. “The action of the Board of Trustees today brings the solution of an extremely difficult problem,” he said. “Happily, the heat that has developed among some of the alumni and friends of the college over the question of a change of location has not extended to members of the board who, while differing in their opinions, have been actuated solely by their desire to promote the best interests of the College . . . with all the controversial factors happily removed, it now becomes our task to capitalize on the loyalty and good will of our friends, confident that what must be done can and will be accomplished.” His ending became a catchphrase for the twenty-year effort to move the College.

The Sentinel waxed both poetic and prophetic: “In the new Colby that is to be, we believe that Waterville is to have its full share in making for a better and finer institution which will be an honor to the State of Maine and take its place among the outstanding institutions of higher learning in the country.”

Immediately, the Committee of One Hundred began to wring every spare nickel out of a city that had precious little loose change. Five pledges of $5,000 came quickly, but the rest was in small gifts. The deadline was April 12, 1931, when the trustees would meet for a final decision. With two days left, they were $2,000 short. Ima Wanderer begged for the last pennies “to save the city its greatest industry” and suggested the city print the names of donors “on parchment and hang them in City Hall so those who come after will know who of the Waterville citizens were loyal to the city in its time of peril and thus do them honor.” Whether or not the city would buy parchment, the Sentinel printed the names for two days in a row, more than five hundred of them. “After today,” the newspaper scolded, “no excuses will be in order.”

The committee held its final meeting on Saturday night, April 11, at Waterville Savings Bank on Main Street. When the meeting opened Drummond reported $97,406 in gifts and pledges. Federal Trust officials promised to fill any shortfall of less than $500. Committee members made additional gifts out of their own pockets. Before the meeting ended the goal was topped at $101,376.
By prearranged signal, the Central Fire Station siren began to wail and two groups—Drews Band and the Waterville Military Band—stepped out to march down Main Street, with horn-tooting cars behind them. The bands stopped in front of the bank to serenade the committee and then proceeded to Castonguay Square at City Hall.

In the general hullabaloo, no one thought to tell the firefighters in the south end Water Street station what was going on. Believing there was a conflagration on Main Street, the firemen roared north in their 1924 Dodge hose cart nicknamed Pee Wee and met the revelers head-on. Matters were soon cleared up, and the firefighters joined the celebration. From the square, the merrymakers marched onto Front Street and up College Avenue to the President’s House to play for Johnson. He had gone from goat to hero in ten months’ time.

The next day trustees agreed on the Mayflower Hill site. A week later, in a grand ceremony at the Opera House, Mayor Dubord presented Wadsworth with the deed to the new campus. Judy Taylor spoke at the alumni dinner that spring and took the occasion to recall his wager that Colby would remain in Waterville. He collected his penny on the platform from a man who wanted him to win: Franklin Johnson.

OLD PASTURES

In the spring of 1931 Walter Wyman sent his Central Maine Power Company engineers to survey Mayflower Hill, and in August an open house was held for local citizens. Standing in the field below where the chapel would go, the group gaped at the vast expanse: acres and acres to far horizons, a striking contrast to the cramped and dingy place by the river. It was mainly old pastureland with an occasional small woodlot, and an orchard on the steep facing slope near a place called Beefsteak Grove, where critters once fed among the trees. The fields were crisscrossed with half-fallen fences that had divided farms; here and there could be seen the ubiquitous ledge, soon to confound the construction. Growing along the edges of the woods were expanses of trailing arbutus, the fragrant flower that gave the place its name.

20. The newly acquired property consisted of about six hundred acres, less than half the amount for which Wyman had taken options. It was an assembly of lots from ten owners: Alonzo Morrell, Ralph Stanley, the heirs of W. H. Stanley, Elmore Hustus, Phillippe Poulin, Wilfred LaPointe, Roy Page, Thomas Labbe, William Lannigan, and Mount Merici Convent.

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Frank Johnson led the August assembly as it passed under a crude ridgepole archway hastily constructed over the narrow, unpaved road at the foot of the hill. A sign hung in the middle:

**Entering**
**Mayflower Hill Park**
**600 Acre Site of the New Campus**
**Colby College**

Ebullient as always, Johnson pointed to invisible buildings and roadways. Many in the crowd were expected to help complete the dream, and while Johnson's enthusiasm was contagious, the devastation of Black Tuesday still rang in their ears.

Despite the times, planning for the layout of the campus began immediately. In February 1931, trustees commissioned architect Larson and hired the New York firm of Hegeman-Harris as general contractor. Best known for his work at Dartmouth, Larson had worked on more than two dozen campuses. Stanley Nicholson, administrative vice president in the 1980s, wrote that Larson was an easy choice for trustees who were attracted by his traditionalist approach, and his preference for the neo-Georgian style. As Nicholson explained, Larson chose “a pattern based on Thomas Jefferson’s design for the University of Virginia—extended rectangular space, defining a longitudinal axis, with a dominant structure (the library) as a focal point at one end and subsidiary buildings along the sides.” Larson took his scheme, planned for flat land in Augusta, and redrew it for the rolling Waterville hillside.

First, there was the matter of finding money to build anything at all. A Mayflower Hill campaign was launched with the help of the fundraising consulting firm Marts and Lundy, which sent Joseph Coburn Smith '24 as its principal agent.21 (In a short while Smith left the firm and joined the College as a PR man.)

The campaign had a goal of $3 million, quite enough for a new college, and the effort was launched at the fall Colby Night dinner in the gymnasium by the river. Judy Taylor spoke. He had retired in the spring after an American

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21. Smith had a long Colby pedigree. He was the son of former board chair George Otis Smith, the nephew of Louise Coburn, and the grandnephew of the College’s seventh president, George Dana Boardman Pepper. He had a stutter, a condition triggered whenever he got excited. He stuttered a lot when he talked about Colby. As the undergraduate editor of the student newspaper, the *Echo*, it was Smith who first proposed that the College adopt the white mule as its rather odd mascot.
record: sixty-three years as a teacher and sixty-seven years involved with the College. He stunned the audience by promising $250,000 to the campaign, but when he died a year later his entangled estate, decimated by the Depression, had no funds for Colby at all.

The Taylor debacle was only the first of a series of setbacks that were enough to make the fainthearted believe in jinxes. Years later, Colby's top fundraiser, Ed Turner, wrote a short essay on the travails of the College's move to a better neighborhood. He called it "The Perils of Pauline," a name taken from the 1914 silent film episodic serial, the most enduring scene of which, ironically, was of Pauline tied to the railroad tracks and borne down upon by a train. He told of Johnson's trip to the Bahamas to meet with the multimillionaire Sir Harry Oakes, from whom he extracted a promise of $450,000 only to have Sir Harry murdered before the money found its way from his offshore account. He also told of Johnson's appointment with the New York philanthropist Edward Harkness, who died before the two could meet, and the attorney in nearby Ellsworth who wrote to say he would build a dormitory in memory of his father, but fell down his cellar stairs and died of his injuries the day after the letter was sent. Still, Johnson was indefatigable.22

No tale of near misses compared to the discouraging events on the larger scene that cursed much more than Colby. The national Mayflower Hill Campaign kickoff dinner was held in Boston on the evening of March 4, 1933. President Franklin Roosevelt closed the nation's banks the next morning and solicitations for the Mayflower Hill Campaign stopped.23

Desperate for help, Johnson and his mostly Republican board turned to Roosevelt and his New Deal. Johnson convinced his friend and trustee Henry Hilton to help in Washington. Hilton had left the board at Dartmouth to join Colby's. His understanding of Dartmouth's renowned success in getting money from graduates led him, in spite of the times, to urge Johnson to begin an annual alumni fund. Hilton, a leading partner in the Chicago publishing firm of Ginn and Company, knew Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's secretary of the interior, and went to see him with Bainbridge Colby, a fellow trustee who had been secretary of state under Woodrow Wilson. In 1935, when solicitations resumed, Colby was assigned a Works Progress Administration (WPA) program to build

22. A man once turned down a plea to give and told Johnson he had no interest in Colby. "Give us $100,000," Johnson replied, "and you will."
23. Among the closed banks was the Peoples-Ticonic Bank of Waterville, which shut down permanently, taking with it some fifty thousand dollars of the College's money. Years later, most of the funds were returned.

ALONG THE RIVER
the main road and lay a sewer line to the campus. The year before, also with federal money, a bridge was built over the Messalonskee Stream at the terminus of North Street and, with the help of the Maine Central Railroad, a rail overpass was installed to allow safe travel from the County Road up to the “back door” of the campus.

Enthusiasm for the New Deal was not limited to College officials looking for a way to build a campus. In 1936 Roland Gammon ’37 took up the cudgel for Roosevelt’s reelection on page one in the Echo: “Now is the time for all intelligent collegians to rally to the cause that has been America’s salvation—The New Deal.” Without realizing, the Echo had become Maine’s first Democratic newspaper. His editorial raging against “the outmoded Republican No-Deal . . . with its laissez-faire in business and splendid isolation in foreign affairs,” created a firestorm. The local Sentinel and the Portland Press Herald called for gagging the upstart editor. Professors Galen Eustis and Curtis Morrow called for his “suppression or expulsion.” Gammon later remembered a command appearance in the president’s office. “As the only Democratic editor in Maine,” Frank Johnson said, “you seem to be under fire as everything from a fool to a communist.” Gammon waited for the axe to fall. Instead Johnson told him “free speech and a free press are as much a Colby tradition as a Constitutional guarantee.” The College would not interfere with his pro-Roosevelt policy.

The full price of building a campus was not borne by construction costs alone. As annual budgets were pared to the bone to find building money, faculty members worked for sacrificial salaries. Old campus buildings were barely maintained, and students living there could only imagine what their successors might enjoy. As they waited for Johnson’s dream to come true, generations of students and faculty endured inconvenience and distraction as they straddled two campuses. Graduates of those years would say that their education was not only adequate, but also remarkable. In 1939 two of the twelve U.S. Rhodes Scholarships went to Colby graduates: William Carter ’38 and John Rideout ’36.24

24. The first Colby Rhodes Scholar was Harold Soule ’04. Abbott Smith ’26 was the second.
The Herculean effort to turn the old pastureland into a College wore on, but not until 1937 was there solid evidence that there was going to be any building at all. In March, George Horace Lorimer '98, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, gave $200,000 for a chapel to honor his father, once pastor of Boston's Tremont Temple. Ground was broken for the chapel in August, and Joe Smith arranged a perfect photo opportunity. Johnson, surrounded by dignitaries on a platform down the hill, pushed the plunger igniting dynamite that exploded the hillside behind them in a mushroom of smoke and debris. At the same time, a campaign was begun to secure $300,000 for a building in memory of Prexy Roberts. Even in this worst of times, gifts sufficient to ensure the building of Roberts Union came quickly from alumni who adored the late president. Groundbreaking ceremonies were held in the spring of 1938.

Meanwhile, alumnae struggled to raise money for their own union, as yet unnamed. Work on that facility began a year later. It was eventually (1960) named for Ninetta Mae Runnals '08, dean of women and professor of mathematics (1920–49). A Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, native, Runnals had a master's degree from Columbia's School of Education and was serving as dean of girls at Maine Central Institute in nearby Pittsfield in 1919 when she got a letter from President Roberts: "I am writing to inquire if you would be at all interested in the deanship of women here for the coming year and the rest of your life." She set her terms (full faculty membership and a free hand to improve the lot of women). Roberts accepted: "The salary is more than the college can pay but I am confident that you will earn it." She did.

Most everyone called her "Miss Runnals." A devout Baptist, she was strict in the enforcement of tight rules and liberal with second chances. She knew almost every student under her care (it was said she could recite the full names of every woman in the commencement line without looking at the list) and was an unrelenting advocate for her "girls" in a world firmly centered on the men. "There was a general feeling Colby was a men's college and women were just permitted to come," she later recalled of her arrival in 1920. Still, she pressed for the women at her weekly conferences with "Rob" (Roberts) and "brought up things just a little bit at a time, until I had sort of crept up on him." Runnals worked only a brief time on Mayflower Hill but was a full partner in much of the planning of the new women's dorms. "Adjacent dorms seem to be a good arrangement with coeducational lounges and dining facilities," she said. "I expect the men's behavior at meals is better than it was when they had their own dining halls." She was recalled to College service in 1953 to serve six years on the board of trustees.

With two buildings underway, Johnson and the others despaired of finding...
donations for the library, the centerpiece of Larson's plan. The widow of James King '89 had given $150,000 for part of a library, but the building couldn't fly on a single wing. More than twice the amount was needed. As early as 1933 Johnson fixed on Merton Miller '90, who had made a fortune in the gold mines of the Philippines. Miller promised some $50,000 would be in his estate to build a library in memory of his parents, William and Esther. At Johnson's urging in 1937 he agreed to do even more and do it sooner. He wrote Johnson to say he wanted to keep his money "out of the greedy hands of politicians" and transferred 10,000 shares of his gold stock for the construction of the library. In 1938 the foundation was poured. At first Miller paid the construction bills as they came in, but in 1940 he began to worry about a possible Japanese war occupation of the islands and asked Johnson to slow construction. A year later, when the Japanese took the islands, Miller's mines were flooded. After the islands were recaptured, the mines were pumped out, and Miller resumed sending checks.

In 1938 the College launched the Maine Million campaign, a name describing the precise source and amount of the next push. It was focused on finding funds for the men's dormitories. Herbert Hoover sent remarks for the campaign kickoff dinner in Portland.25 George Averill was chairman of the board and, in the fashion of leaders before and since, made the lead gift of $100,000 to be used "for any purpose the trustees deem wise." Of the many who gave to build Mayflower Hill, none were more generous than the Averills, whose philanthropy benefited not only the College but also many institutions in Waterville. Averill had begun his career as a physician in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Poor health forced him to leave medicine; and he and his wife, Mabel, moved to Waterville, where he became general manager of the Keyes Fibre Company in Fairfield, the molded pulp firm founded in 1903 by her father, Martin Keyes. Mabel died in 1918, and in 1921 Averill married Frances Moser of Bangor. He sold his Keyes interests in 1927. The fortune that had been served up on paper plates was invested in real estate and oil wells in California.

He was, by far, the richest man in town. He was also the most generous. His gifts to Colby exceeded $1 million, making him the largest single benefactor of

25. Five years after his plagued U.S. presidency, Hoover railed against intervening in a war that seemed certain to come. His personal pain of having to defend his values against public scorn was reflected in his remarks for Colby: "Not only is it the province of the small college to furnish leaders who stand firm because they individually hold certain positive principles of life and of morals, and defend spiritual values, but a larger field in liberal education is to furnish followers, citizens who will place reason above emotion."
the new campus. His generosity was felt in town as well. He spared the College further awkwardness over abandoning the old campus the same year the new Alumnae Building was opened when he put up most of the money to buy it from the College and give it to the local Boys Club he helped to found. Speaking at a luncheon meeting of the Maine Million Committee, Averill explained that his most important and useful trustee committee assignment was on the one that had induced Franklin Johnson “to give up a much higher salary” and come to Waterville. “Our greatest desire,” Averill said, “is to see that dream of good Doctor Johnson’s realized—that is to see that dear Old Lady safely moved to her new home on Mayflower Hill and functioning 100% in 1941.”

In fact, in 1941 the new campus was not functioning at all.

WORLD WAR II

The great World War was a dreary time for colleges everywhere. Most men had gone to fight, and educational resources, scarce to begin with, were further depleted by the war effort. Frank Johnson’s dream, already delayed by a crippled economy, was put on hold again, and students and faculty endured the drudgery of having to shuttle between the sorry old campus and the incomplete new facilities on the Hill.

Johnson was out of town in 1941 when war was declared. On December 8, the day after the bombings at Pearl Harbor, Dean Ernest Marriner addressed the men students. It was one of his finest Colby moments:

Now, if ever, the nation has need of trained minds. It is for you to take a private oath of allegiance to serious college work, as our friends and relatives in the service take public oath of allegiance to military duty. Then, when the nation does call you into its armed services, you will indeed be ready. There must be no jitteriness, no confusion, no futile bull sessions about what we shall do next, when the obvious next is tomorrow’s lessons. Not with fear, not with uncertainty, certainly not with indifference, we shall meet whatever call our nation makes upon us. With calm yet alert courage, as Elijah Lovejoy faced the mob at Alton, as William Parker faced the Confederate charge at Spotsylvania, as Murray Morgan faced German bayonets at Mons, we too shall meet the challenge of our day. Before we are Dekes or Zetes or members of any other fraternity, before we are Protestants or Catholics or Jews, even before we are Colby men, we are Americans, and as Americans we shall not fail.
The effort to keep men from impulsive flight was mostly in vain. There were no general deferments for college men—Colby refused to join colleges that asked for them—but most local draft boards were willing to exempt those studying medicine or other natural sciences. Still there was no way to predict the likelihood of being called, and campuses swarmed with military recruiters. In the fall of 1941 enrollment stood at 435 men and 267 women. By September 1942, the number of men had plummeted by a third. Within a year the total enrollment dropped to 282.

To stem the exodus, Colby pressed for the assignment of a government military training unit and was selected for the new College Training Program of the Army Air Force. The plan, begun in early 1943, called for one hundred enlisted men to arrive each month until the detachment reached five hundred. Each group would receive four months of classroom instruction and a final month of flight training prior to reporting to the Army Air Force Pre-Flight School. It was, in fact, a mess. Colby simply turned its facilities over to the Army. Enlistees were not truly students. The Army selected them, and many were not qualified for college work. Treasurer Arthur Seepe kept separate books to protect College money. Marriner was charged to make it all work. He gave it a good fight even while continuing as dean, but his hands were usually tied in Army red tape. All too often, only one of some twenty groups entering the Twenty-first College Training Detachment (CTD) ever completed the five-month program. Most got called to service before they were finished. Many became foot soldiers. In February 1944, after one year of operation, the CTD was disbanded. In June, a year before the German surrender, the last man in uniform left the program.

For a moment that year, trustees were tempted to surrender the new campus itself. There was no money to build and no construction materials or laborers anyway. When the Navy offered to lease the entire campus and turn it into a thousand-bed hospital, treasurer Galen Eustis and buildings and grounds superintendent Francis Armstrong were tempted. Eustis presented the proposal at the April meeting of the board. He said the deal involved “all present buildings plus completion and construction of others according to our plans.” After brief consideration by a special trustee committee, the offer was rejected.

A second cooperative defense program was underway before the war. In 1939, in cooperation with the Civil Aeronautics Authority and the managers of

the local airport, the College began a Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) Program. Pilots were prepared under the Air Corps Enlisted Reserve (ACER) program. Over the next three years George Gerry, the local operator, trained ten Navy lieutenants who were sent on to Pensacola, Florida, as flight instructors. From May 1942 until the end of the war all local civilian traffic was diverted to Pittsfield. In return for use of the airstrip, the federal government paved the airport road and runways.

Throughout the war, the government pressed colleges to accelerate programs and allow men to finish before reaching the draft age of eighteen. It made a strange mix on the campuses where the men were mostly seventeen-year-olds who had never finished high school. Over the next two years the College abandoned vacations and recesses and added a twelve-week summer term carrying a full semester of credit. A new cadre of freshmen arrived three times a year, and there were three commencements. Volunteer faculty taught summer courses with no extra compensation in the first year and a small stipend in the summer of 1943, after which the program was abandoned.

As trustees continued to search for ways to boost the sagging enrollment, in 1943, Dr. F. T. Hill '10 convinced them to begin a school of nursing, a five-year program requiring two-and-a-half years of undergraduate study, two years of clinical study in the field, and a final year back at Colby. An adjunct to the school was a course in medical technology. Both programs were discontinued in 1950.

These were dark times in more ways than one. The academic year 1942–43 was the darkest. It was the year of double daylight savings with a second hour added to the customary summer one-hour fallback, and both hours continued into the winter. By the biological clocks of students, eight o’clock classes seemed to begin at six. In the winter of 1943 the College bus, the Blue Beetle, chugged up and down from dark mornings to darker nights, catering to two hundred women and a mere fifty-five men.

27. The airport had been in operation since 1931 when a prime source of business was the shipment of films for Haines Theater. Amelia Earhart landed there in 1933 to inaugurate a new Boston and Maine Airways Flight Service (Waterville, Bangor, Rockland, Portland, Boston) and Vaughn Monroe breezed through on his way to the Lakewood summer theater. Two future presidents, Richard Nixon in 1966 and Jimmy Carter ten years later, dropped by on their campaign journeys to the White House.

28. The CPT program was discontinued in 1951 when a training pilot, Paul Paulette, was killed in a crash in Fairfield Center.
Throughout the war, students made the best of it, later recalling small pleasures in a period void of anything extra. Many trudged over the tracks between classes to have coffee at the railway station where actress Dorothy Lamour had stopped to sell war bonds. Anne Lawrence Bondy ’46, later a trustee, remembered the worry about loved ones overseas and having to wait as long trains lumbered over the crossing at College Avenue, lugging war supplies south and prisoners of war to containment camps in the north Maine woods. Course offerings were slim in both the classrooms and dining rooms, where “meat extender” was used generously. Bondy claimed steak was on the menu only once—when the cattle barn burned at nearby Mount Merici Convent. Jean Whiston ’47 said war students knew neither campus very well. Some classes were held in the new women’s union. “In winter,” she said, “the degree of comfort depended on the proximity to the boiler room. But of academic merit was the fact that students nearest the wall could listen to a lesson in economics while partially sitting in on a lecture in classics being delivered next door.” There were shortages of almost everything.

Johnson retired in the spring of 1942 with his campus dream far from complete. He had tried to leave when the war began, but nervous trustees convinced him to stay another year. Lorimer Chapel, Roberts Union, Miller Library, Women’s (Runnals) Union, East (Small, Champlin, Butler) and West (Chaplin, Pepper, Robins) men’s dormitories, and two women’s dorms were in stages of completion.

The women’s dorms were ready first. The women’s union and its attached Averill Gymnasium—the result of a second $100,000 gift from the doctor and his wife—opened first. Mary Low and Louise Coburn dormitories were rushed to readiness, and in the fall of 1942 women were shoehorned in, three in rooms meant for two and two in places made for one. Johnson joined his successor, J. Seelye Bixler, at the ceremonies. The choice of names had been easy. Mary Caffrey Low Carver was the first woman graduate, and Louise Helen Coburn, the second.

At war’s end in 1945, Colby counted some 1,350 of its men and women, in-

29. Buildings in the men’s quadrangle were named for former Colby presidents: Jeremiah Chaplin (1822–33), James Tift Champlin (1857–53), Henry Ephriam Robins (1873–82), George Dana Boardman Pepper (1882–89), and Albion Woodbury Small (1889–92).

30. The Coburns were lumber barons from Skowhegan. Both her grandfather and her uncle, a Maine governor, had served on the College board. She too excelled in the classroom and worked to improve the lot of women at Colby, as founder of the alumnae association and the first woman on the board of trustees.
cluding nine faculty members, who had served the war effort. Sixty-three gave their lives. Many of those who returned took advantage of the first-ever veterans’ benefits, the G.I. Bill, and once again the College jiggled the rules to give academic credit for time in service. Of some 750 veterans who eventually earned immediate postwar Colby degrees the largest number (413) was enrolled in 1947–48. (By 1951–52 the veteran population dropped to twenty-three.)

BUILDING AGAIN

Major construction all but halted for the duration, and the campus vaguely resembled photographs from war-ravaged cities in Europe: holes in the ground, vacant foundations, partial walls, and the shells of buildings.

With little money for construction, local crews had used the war period to begin fashioning the landscape. Larson’s solution for the impossible ledge was to leave it alone. Instead he designed sloping terraces around the central buildings, made from fill taken from a boggy area west of Miller Library. The excavation exposed a number of small springs that, beginning in 1939, created a pond, soon named for Johnson. Terraces in front of the library were the most striking. Mary Curtis Bok, daughter of the publisher Cyrus Curtis (Mr. Lorimer’s publisher) did not like the original sloping lawns in front of the chapel and in 1951 gave money to make it right.

Soon after the Japanese surrender, contracts were issued for $2 million in new buildings. Only a fraction of the money was in hand. Four barracks buildings were purchased from a Rhode Island shipyard and hastily transplanted on the northwest corner of the campus. Each one had eight apartments for returning married veterans. The apartments were both a blight and a blessing.

31. Many graduate and professional schools accepted returning veterans even though they had not received their undergraduate degrees. Nearly a half-century later Colby offered its diploma to Colby veterans who had gone on to earn higher degrees. In a special ceremony in October 1989, ten were honored in a small and sentimental private commencement attended by trustees and overseers. The event was complete with caps and gowns, Latin charges, and proud families, including many grandchildren. More veterans came to collect their diplomas at the 1990 commencement.

32. Colby names became part of the Navy during the war. In October 1943 a U.S. Liberty Ship, the SS Jeremiah Chaplin, sailed from South Portland. Bixler’s wife, Mary, cracked the champagne bottle on the bow at its christening. The SS Colby Victory was launched from California two years later.

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The plan was to keep them for only a few years, but they remained in use until 1958 and were not torn down until the early 1960s.

The first men's housing, East and West Quads, opened in 1946, seven years after construction began. Johnson, who had never gotten to officiate at the dedication of a new building, spoke to a commencement weekend audience that year. "A schoolmaster doesn't earn much money," he said, "but I lived frugally and made some prudent investments. I would be able to give the college more if I hadn't made some imprudent ones too." He then presented a check to Colby for $96,247.47, an amount that matched to the penny the total of his salary over nineteen years as president.

In the fall of 1947 Maine reeled from devastating forest fires at Bar Harbor and in York County. The fires raged for a week. Plans for Homecoming Weekend were scaled back and many students traveled down east to join volunteer firefighters. The football game was canceled, and weekend entertainment was trimmed to a simple, drab dance. During intermission a double quartet of men in bowties sang barbershop harmony. The Colby Eight, formed around an old, loosely tuned baby grand on the second floor of the new Roberts Union, was an instant success.

Part of Miller Library was opened that fall, and the hands of the tower clock, frozen at 8 o'clock (first class) and awaiting internal works since 1939, began to turn. The four faces rarely told the same time, a fine thing for students arriving late to class. The library was the tallest building in the state (191 feet), and although there was no law to require it, two dozen blue neon lights were installed at the top of the tower to warn night-flying aircraft. The "Blue Light" soon created intriguing lore of its own.

The library's most unusual tradition, born of necessity and continued for simple convenience, was its assembly of nonlibrary functions. With buildings for classrooms and offices still on the drawing boards, spaces designed as reading and circulation areas were partitioned for temporary classrooms. Spaces planned for other uses became shared faculty and administrative offices. The English department carved offices among the carrels of the stacks; two lecture rooms were separated by a supply and mimeographing room. Still it was not enough, and faculty members found themselves teaching in unlikely places, from the tower of the chapel to the basement of Roberts Union.

Of all the odd tenants, the most incongruous was the College Spa, a snack

33. The original members of the Colby Eight (plus one) were Ed Waller '51, Dick Leonard '50, Clifford "Bump" Bean '51, Phil Lawrence '50, George Bowers '50, Tom Samuelson '50, Bob Armitage '50, Harold Wormuth '50, and Conrad White '49.
bar and gathering place sharing its tiny space with the nation’s smallest college bookstore, operated by the strict and efficient Millard Trott. Within a decade, classroom partitions were removed and the administrators and a few faculty moved out, but the Spa (habitues were called “Spa Rats”) remained an institution within an institution for thirty years. The management contract was let to local Army veteran Joe Joseph and his partner, Gubby Carter Sr. The two were managers of the downtown Templeton Hotel and Restaurant. Joe died of war wounds in 1954. His brother John took charge, joined by brother Pete in 1960. The Spa eventually moved out in 1975, but the practice of mingling offices in the stacks and reading rooms of the library continued.

In 1947 the Averills came to the rescue again. Before the war, Colby had received a $200,000 bequest from George Averill’s first mother-in-law, Jennie Keyes, to build a much-needed building for chemistry and physics. At war’s end inflation had doubled the estimated cost. The Averills pledged the shortfall, and work began on both the Keyes Building (opened in 1950) and the companion Life Science building for geology, biology, and mathematics.

Lorimer Chapel, the first new campus building begun nine years before, opened in 1948. That same year the Bixlers moved into the new President’s House, having spent the previous year in a second-floor apartment in Roberts Union. The Averills had given $50,000 to build the new house, but inflated costs forced a construction delay. Four years later the College added proceeds from the sale of the old President’s House on College Avenue and work on the new house continued. Bixler used his “President’s Page” in the Alumnus to describe it:

In both laundry and kitchen electricity is very much in evidence with buttons that produce flashing colored lights or mysterious hidden swishings and rumblings. Over the garage is a cupola, called “Howard Johnstonesque” by the students, soon to be surmounted by a weathervane in wrought iron bearing a musical staff with the notes of the opening theme of Dr. Ermanno Comparetti’s Mayflower Hill Concerto. This is the gift of Mr. Charles Westcott of Blue Hill in memory of his son Robert, who died in the war.

Before the house could be built it was necessary to move a wood-framed farmhouse, originally the home of Josiah Morrell, from the adjacent property. It was rolled along an old road called Maple Court to a grove of trees behind the tennis courts where it was renovated and used as a home for the superintendent of buildings and grounds.

The year 1948 also saw the opening of the first two fraternity houses, DKE
and A’O, and myriad athletic facilities sorely needed in order to abandon and sell the riverbank campus. A war-surplus airplane hangar was sliced in two and its pieces placed side-by-side to create a dirt-floor fieldhouse. In the winters, a portable wooden floor was laid for basketball. The building’s brick front gave the hint of the Georgian theme and enclosed the entrance and staff offices.¹⁴ In 1956 the building was dedicated to Herbert Wadsworth, chair of the board from 1925 to 1937.

Wadsworth was a bookkeeper and partner in a Livermore Falls firm that manufactured oilcloth table coverings in the days when they were used for more than picnics. A politician and respected Republican state senator, he chaired the powerful appropriations and financial affairs committee (and the committee on insane hospitals) and introduced the legislation creating the first state constabulary (state police) out of general concern about speeders on the expanding Maine highways. His leadership in building the fieldhouse on the old campus made him the logical choice for the naming of the new one. When he died, the residue of his estate, $100,000, was left to Colby, the income to be used to maintain a professorship “wherein shall be taught and expounded the practices and principles of sound and prudent business.”

The first football game on the Hill was played in September 1948 (Colby beat American International College), and the new field was dedicated at ceremonies a month later and named for Charles F. T. Seaverns ‘01. The Alumnus magazine called it “the first athletic field of the Atomic Age” and, in perfect celebration, Colby beat Bowdoin, 14–0. It was the second Colby field named for Seaverns. In 1922, on the occasion of the late observance of College Centennial, Seaverns pledged $75,000 for an endowment to produce $3,500 a year to create a new Department of Physical Training and Athletics and to operate it “in perpetuity.” The football field on the old campus was named “now and forever” for him. A decade later Seaverns served as a trustee leader of the Maine Million Campaign. His own gifts included the central lounge for the new Roberts Union (now the Colby Seaverns Bookstore), and in 1932 he served as chairman of the College’s first-ever annual alumni fund.

Crafts Field for baseball and softball, given in memory of Oliver Crafts by his parents, was dedicated in 1948, as were tennis courts, built near Mayflower Hill Drive in memory of Walter Wales, killed in the invasion of Sicily. Neither Crafts nor Wales had gone to Colby.

³⁴ The old hanger infrastructure remains, a survivor of three subsequent major renovations and a fire.
As the 1950s dawned there were fourteen buildings on the new campus.\(^{35}\) Like “the little engine that could,” Colby was slowly and bravely chugging up the Hill. The *Saturday Evening Post* called it “a magnificent triumph of spiritual engineering,” and indeed it was. The move was without precedent.\(^{36}\) Some thirteen thousand people made gifts to create Mayflower Hill, nearly half of them with no ties to Colby at all.

The cost, once estimated at $3 million, was already more than doubled, but after twenty years of struggle, Colby’s place seemed more secure. Yet there was still much to do. With every new penny being devoted to construction, there was a growing self-consciousness about what had *not* been achieved. While other colleges had taken whatever extra money they could find to enrich their endowments and add new faculty and programs, Colby had been busily buying bricks.

\(^{35}\) The early buildings included a small pumping station at the foot of the Hill, an unanticipated structure required when it was discovered that the campus was too high to be gravity fed by the Kennebec Water District. A pump was needed to supply a large storage tank above Beefsteak Grove.

\(^{36}\) Wake Forest had relocated, but a single benefactor paid the cost.
2. THE 1950S

THE BLUE BEETLE

College students were in the “Silent Generation,” quietly bent on finding the opportunities and riches that had eluded their parents. Many came from families nesting in the suburbs, buying stoves, refrigerators, washing machines, and other prizes of the war-boosted technology. Television, still black-and-white and “snowy,” began to shape their lives in ways they did not understand. They trusted their political leaders—Franklin Roosevelt was mourned, Harry Truman was a pleasant surprise, and Dwight Eisenhower became their hero—and they revered their teachers, still reigning in the manner of the old school. Most of the boys were hot on the trail of making money, and most of the girls were hot on the trails of the boys who wanted to make it. If they were “silent” it was only because there wasn’t much to make noise about. Many of them would later say that fate had given them the best of times for growing up.

The College still straddled two campuses, and for many students the mile-wide gap between the two Colbys was closed by a big International school bus, the Blue Beetle, shuttling them back and forth and serving as a convenient and curious center of social life. It had been running up and down the Hill for eight years. By the fall of 1952 the College would be firmly ensconced on the Hill, and the bus would be retired. In the meantime, there was still circling to do.

In the fall of 1950, some three hundred freshmen arrived a week early for orientation, and the Blue Beetle resumed its daily route. It was always jammed beyond its listed capacity, but nobody counted, least of all Rowena Nugent, a tiny woman who concentrated mightily on her driving. She needed to. Sitting,

1. The last class on the old campus was a biology lab, held in Coburn Hall on the morning of May 22, 1951.
standing, and jostling around, students shouted above the din of the engine, to one another and out the window. Besides the perennial fall buzz about the new freshmen, there were many things to catch up on. Those who arrived by train had narrowly missed a national rail strike, averted when President Truman seized the railroads. The newspapers had begun carrying a new comic strip, *Peanuts*, and the Diners’ Club was issuing intriguing new plastic things called credit cards.

On the global front the talk was mostly about communism. That spring, a million Chinese Communists had crossed the Yangtze River to run Nationalist party leader Chiang Kai-shek across the Formosa Strait to Taiwan, and the world’s biggest country was split in two. The faculty began to worry that students were short of instruction on international politics, and there were hastily arranged Gabrielson Lectures (a series established in 1946 by Colby trustee Guy Gabrielson) aimed at sorting things out.

Students had barely left for the summer when North Korean troops charged south into the Republic of Korea. Seoul fell quickly and the communist threat suddenly seemed very real, as ever-larger headlines warned of another war. For the first time the United Nations agreed to fight; and, on his own, President Truman ordered forces to provide “tactical” support south of the 38th parallel. “We are not at war,” he said, claiming the involvement was more accurately a “police action.” He would rue the day. Some 100,000 Americans suffered casualties over the next three years, and the Republicans made hay with his remark in the 1952 presidential campaign.

News of the communism threat had a local slant, tied to Maine and Senator Margaret Chase Smith from nearby Skowhegan. She had challenged the bully from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, with her “declaration of conscience” speech. Earlier, in a talk containing phrases flatly stolen from the champion anticommunist, Richard Nixon, McCarthy claimed to hold the names of 205 Communists working in the State Department. The Age of Suspicion was full-blown; fingers were pointed and accusations made; jobs and reputations were lost.

Truman said privately that “the son of a bitch ought to be impeached,” but McCarthy met little resistance until Smith took him on. In a speech written by hand at her Skowhegan home, she said it was “high time that we remembered

2. One of the hay-makers was lecture series sponsor Gabrielson, then chairman of the Republican National Committee. Gabrielson backed Robert Taft of Ohio at the convention. In the end the country had a new president, Dwight Eisenhower, and the GOP had a new chairman.
that we have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution (that) speaks not only of the freedom of speech but also of trial by jury instead of trial by accusation." The next day, Bernard Baruch said if a man had made the same declaration, he would be elected president.

The Blue Beetle must also have echoed with chatter about sports. Major League Baseball had sold the All-Star Game and World Series television rights for $1 million a year for the next six years, and Red Sox fans were crushed when Ted Williams, who batted .406 in 1941, was recalled to the air force and was flying over Korea by the end of the 1950 season. And there was Jackie Robinson, the Brooklyn Dodger and the first black player in the modern major leagues, poised to become the National League MVP.3

The bus began its daily run from Hedman Hall downtown, and then lumbered onto College Avenue for a stop in front of old Mary Low. It stopped at the only set of traffic lights in town, where College Avenue ended, at the top of a bustling, two-way Main Street. Across the intersection sat the classic post office and on the right loomed the venerable Elwood Hotel, exactly one hundred years old. The building had but a few not-so-good years left. (Its front yard was already relinquished to an Esso Servicenter.) Across the street the fire station blasted a curfew every night at nine, to test the horn and get the kids off the streets.

Post Office Square was the center of town; and Waterville, population 19,584, was still growing. Within two years there would be no college on College Avenue (and many fewer elms on Elm Street), but that fall the busy downtown was an inviting place. As the bus passed through the square, students could look downtown and see the marquee of the Haines Theatre where Bob Hope and Lucille Ball were starring in Fancy Pants.

Waterville had eleven hotels and thirty-eight eating places, ranging from competing hot-dog stands on Front Street (Jimmy Datis ran one; Ricky Thomas, the other) to the upscale Jefferson Hotel on College Avenue, where Ma Shiro presided. Joe Pete's Little Big Store was near the rail crossing on Main Street, where Phi Delta Theta fraternity brothers hung out and bought lunch for a buck. Joe and Kay Peters carried the tab for anybody short of cash. Of the many watering holes, a student favorite was Onie Noel's place on Silver

3. Dodger coach Clyde Sukeforth from the tiny Maine town of Washington is credited with identifying Robinson for Brooklyn owner Branch Rickey who wanted the first black player to be "someone with guts enough not to fight back."
Street: a bar to the right with well-scratched booths and tables around a dimly lit room. Alice and Rollie Violette gave light to conversations and served “Dimie” beers. (Onie’s became Alice’s Café in 1956 although students kept calling it Onie’s.) Here and elsewhere the checking of the legal drinking age was spotty. A smattering of veterans improved the general plausibility of any student being of age, and helpful local cops tipped off bar owners when the liquor inspector was in town.

At the top of Main Street, next door to the Waterville Savings Bank with its iron sidewalk chiming clock, was tiny 24-hour Parks Diner, a true railroad car that boasted of its air conditioning. Morgan-Thomas Business College was on the street too. Its name was changed that year to Thomas Junior College.

Although local neighborhoods were separated in ethnic ways, Main Street was a melting pot. Enrico Conte ran a soda shop and sold frosted mugs of root beer for a quarter. Leo Diambri had a lunch counter with “ultra spaghetti.” Willard Arnold II ran the family hardware store. Saul Mandell had another. Evariste LaVerdiere’s drugstore would soon become a chain. George Sterns’s department store boasted the city’s first store elevator and an X-ray machine for measuring feet for shoes. Dunhams sold Hathaway shirts (pricey at $3 a shirt) and did a brisk mail-order business from the back room. Tom Georgantas named his Candy Kitchen for his wife, Bea. His burly form could be seen from the sidewalk, pulling taffy from hooks hung over large copper kettles.

On the corner by Temple Street, above Bob Dexter’s Drug Store and next door to a Chinese restaurant, Al Corey, fresh from the army, ran a tiny music studio, selling reeds and strings and giving lessons. Eventually he moved downstairs and then across the street where he continued the business into the next century. Corey befriended a thousand college students, and campus groups vied for bookings of his “Big Band” orchestra.

At the foot of Main Street was Levine’s, “the store for men and boys.” Since moving downtown from Ticonic Street in 1896, Levine’s may have employed more Colby students than any other (and more than a few faculty members). For certain, it housed two of the College’s most enthusiastic sports fans. The founder’s sons, Ludy ’21 and Pacy ’27, captured and devoured generations of Colby people who came to talk and never left empty-handed. Nephew Howard Miller ’41 helped manage the store and did his best to keep his uncles in check.

James Boyle, department adjutant of the American Legion, practiced law on Main Street and, at no. 131, upstairs over Fidelity Insurance and across the hall from the Waterville Women’s Association, were the offices of a young lawyer recently moved from nearby Rumford. Edmund Muskie was married to Jane Gray, a clerk at nearby Alvina & Delia’s, a women’s store specializing in

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grand hats. Muskie, the law partner of James Glover, was president of the local Lions' Club.\

Community esprit had much to do with the local news media. Howard Gray, Jane Muskie's brother, took over the reins at the *Waterville Morning Sentinel* in 1952, when there was advertising money enough for a deep reporting staff (and 72 paid-by-the-inch area town correspondents) providing lots of local copy, including births, deaths, and hospital admissions. Students listened to the local radio station WTVL, 1490 AM, an ABC affiliate, established in 1948 by Carleton Brown '33. Don MacNeil's *Breakfast Club* was on weekdays at 9 a.m.; *Inner Sanctum*, Monday nights. Local programming included *Luncheon with Allison* (Day) and *Variété Français* with Joe Bulger. Brown had enlisted Colby dean and historian Ernest Marriner '13 to do a weekly 15-minute Sunday show, *Little Talks on Common Things*. Devoted to Maine history, especially that of the Kennebec Valley, the popular program became the nation's longest-running radio show under the same continuing sponsor: Keyes Fibre Company.

In addition to Keyes, the area had four other paper-related mills, eighteen textile and apparel plants, twenty-five food-processing places (some seasonal), and eight shoe and leather firms. Growing pains were not unlike those of similar communities across the nation. Downtown parking was a headache, exacerbated by families that liked to pile in their cars and take diagonal parking spaces on Main Street, only to watch the bustling crowd. An experiment with a rotary traffic circle at the south end of the street was causing a stir; worse, there was talk of the need to make some of the downtown streets one-way.

Three local hospitals—Thayer, Sisters, and Waterville Osteopathic—having brought 447 new citizens into the world in 1950 (and treated 35 cases of whooping cough and 133 of measles), were bursting at the seams. Thayer had just gotten itself a building permit for a $1 million facility on North Street, near the College.

Growth was also putting pressure on the local airport, recently named for Robert LaFleur '44, a Waterville youngster from The Plains and a football star at both Waterville High and Colby, killed in 1943 while on a flying mission over Germany. By 1950 Northeast Airlines was flying DC3s on routes that included Waterville, Lewiston, Portland, and Boston. That summer the city added

4. Muskie had already been elected to the Maine House of Representatives (1946) but was defeated in his 1948 attempt to be mayor of Waterville. Russell Squire, owner of a popular Main Street clothing store, beat him. Muskie wouldn't lose another political campaign until twenty years later when he stood as the Democratic candidate for vice president of the United States.
to the runway, built a hanger, and installed runway lighting so the airport crew no longer needed to set flare pots for night landings.\textsuperscript{5}

As the Beetle headed up narrow Center Street, it continued through the intersection at Pleasant Street, stopping at “Colby Corner” beside Sacred Heart Church,\textsuperscript{6} a gathering place for students waiting to hook rides up the Hill. Further up Gilman Street the bus passed the red brick high school, a focus of pride for a community still heady over the 1944 “Cinderella” boys’ basketball team that had defeated the Somerville (Mass.) team to win the New England high school championships. Like most Maine towns, Waterville was galvanized by basketball. The 1944 team was brought up on basketball by Dutch Bernhardt at the local Boys’ Club and was coached to glory by one of Waterville’s and Colby’s greatest athletes, Wally Donovan ’31.\textsuperscript{7} The school gymnasium was not big enough to handle the horde of fans, and the city inveigled state government to pitch in $50,000 and paid Colby $150,000 for the College’s old gymnasium, fieldhouse, Shannon observatory, and Seaverns football field. The fieldhouse was renovated, but the building had a short life. Clouds of dust rising from the dirt floor around the court dimmed the already weak lighting, and the glass roof leaked like a sieve.

Near the end of its route, the bus crossed the Gilman Street Bridge over Messalonskee Stream and headed up Mayflower Hill Drive. All summer the drive had been closed. Cars were rerouted so the Waterville Sewerage District, established in July, could lay lines ahead of the new paving. Local police warned of a “crackdown” on speeders: exceed 25 mph and pay $5. The vista from the bridge was of old farmland bristling with construction. The new campus had become a magnet for new development west of the stream. There were already a dozen houses between the stream and the campus, and work was beginning on a dozen more. As Mayor Dubord had predicted, the College

\textsuperscript{5} Mayor Russell Squire knew what more air traffic could mean and began to talk about Waterville getting together with Augusta and considering a single airport somewhere in between. He was hooted down in both cities. His vision never got off the ground.

\textsuperscript{6} The building foundation for Sacred Heart was completed in 1908 and for twenty-one years, until the plate was passed enough extra times to pay for construction of the great stone edifice, masses were held in the basement gathering hall. The city’s Catholics—a majority of the population—supported four Catholic churches offering a choice of sixteen Sunday masses and five on weekdays. For the especially devout there were afternoon vespers as well. There were also a dozen Protestant churches in town, and a small Jewish synagogue.

\textsuperscript{7} In thirty-eight years of coaching at Waterville High (1934–72) his basketball and football teams won a combined five state titles.
that the community had fought to keep in town was raising new property tax revenues, hand over fist.

Near the top of Mayflower Hill, on the right, the Blue Beetle passed the white Colonial home of Franklin and Imogene Johnson. He was eighty years old, eight years retired from the Colby presidency. The land between their home and the College was still old pasture, and trees had not yet overtaken the view of the campus from their living room. Johnson waved to the students when the bus passed on the way to Runnals Union where chattering students changed places with those headed back down the Hill. He liked living near his campus where he could watch new buildings going up, walk among them, and supervise the landscaping. By 1950 he was known as the “Man of Mayflower Hill.” All but forgotten was the brief time in the summer two decades before when he was called by other names and reviled by those who feared he would take their College downriver to Augusta. He died in 1956. Ten years later, on Commencement weekend, a tablet honoring his memory was unveiled in Lorimer Chapel. Neil Leonard ’21 spoke at the ceremony: “in our time, while timid souls crept into nameless graves, a rash soul, Franklin Winslow Johnson, appeared, and by forgetting himself, rushed into immortality.” By then the Blue Beetle had been sold for junk, and the College was nicely settled on the Hill.

J. SEELYE BIXLER

Ask anyone who ever met Seelye Bixler to tell about him and the first thing they will likely say is that he remembered their name. He not only remembered almost everybody he ever met, he went to great lengths to get acquainted with more. Sid Farr ’55, who made a career at the College and came to know more Colby people than anyone of his time, was playing touch football with student friends one afternoon in the early 1950s. Crouching over the line as the ball was about to be snapped, he heard a familiar voice speak his name. Startled, he looked up into the face of Dr. Bixler: twinkling eyes; outsized, almost comic ears and nose; and a broad grin. The president had quietly slipped into the game, delighted by his own mischief.

Stories abound of meetings with Bixler, who sometimes called himself “prexy,” although hardly anyone else did. Meeting “Dr. Bixler” was always the same: tall, thin frame bent to bring him face-to-face; an earnest, inquiring look; intent on the conversation. His encyclopedic understanding of students and faculty created a sense of family that was much needed in his time. His personal warmth surprised people who knew only of his great intellect. The first to
come to the presidency as a recognized scholar, he had studied with Husserl and Heidegger in Germany. Albert Schweitzer, the great theologian, musician, and medical missionary, was his friend. Martin Luther King Jr. later quoted Bixler in his sermons. His grandfather was Julius Hawley Seelye, a towering president of Amherst. His father, James Wilson Bixler, was the pastor of the Congregational church in New London, Connecticut, where Bixler was born.

After graduating from Amherst in 1916, he taught at a missionary college in India, returning to study at the Union Seminary. Following brief service in the army during World War I, he resumed teaching at the American University in Beirut before returning to Harvard, and then Yale, where he took his doctorate in philosophy in 1924. He taught at Smith College for nine years, interrupted only by a year of research in Germany. In 1933 he joined the Harvard faculty; when the Colby trustees found him there he was Bussey Professor of Theology and acting dean of the Divinity School.

Boston attorney Neil Leonard '21, who became chairman of the board in 1946 and served through Bixler's term, was put in charge of the search. In June 1941, Leonard reported on the discovery of Bixler to chairman George Otis Smith '93 and other trustees who agreed that the committee should interview him and "if, in their judgment it is expedient, tender him the office of president." It was that simple. Bixler accepted the job and a $10,000 salary and waited a year while Johnson finished up.

Some wondered why Bixler even wanted the job. He might easily have gone to a place where the physical plant and the academic program were already in place. He later answered the question, recalling a meeting with the search committee—Leonard, Charles Seaverns, and Henry Hilton—on a warm afternoon at the creaky old Union Club on Boston's Park Street. The men were quickly in their shirtsleeves, each with a stein of beer:

After about three hours of talk—and I don't know how many steins—we decided to adjourn. As we put on our coats Neil made a classic remark. "Well," he said, "this business of choosing a college president is one awful job. I do hope we haven't made a mistake." "Neil," I could only reply, "be sure my hope is as fervent as yours!" A few weeks later... I telephoned Neil, and the die was cast. Many of my friends were surprised—some more surprised than pleased. Colby seemed a gamble, which like the jewel box in The Merchant of Venice might summon the one who chose it to give and hazard all he had. But the more I became acquainted with Colby people the more clear it was that the decision was in line with some of my most deeply felt convictions.

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In 1941 he was also attracted by Colby's physical promise. He wrote:

one could feel something stirring here that offered a basis for great expectations. Incomplete as the project was, the half finished structures had undeniable grace and dignity, while the symbolism of the plan as a whole made an irresistible appeal. . . . The impression Mayflower Hill makes on me is that of a hospitable host with a cordial welcome. “Come let us reason together,” it seems to say, “accept from this institution an invitation to learning.” In my own case the invitation was irresistible.

It was conviction and sense of purpose that made him take the job, and a dozen years later the same two things kept him when Amherst flirted with him to be its president.

By the time Bixler arrived, the College had already lost much of its Baptist bent. In his last year Johnson told the board that Colby, “once a college attended by native sons and daughters of Maine, predominantly from Baptist families, has become cosmopolitan—geographically, racially and religiously.” He proved it by providing a survey of the new freshmen: 36 Congregationalists, 34 Catholics, 33 Baptists, 29 Episcopalians, and two Jewish refugees being supported by the Society of Friends. Even so, members of the board were mindful of the condition of Gardner Colby’s gift requiring that the president and a majority of the board be Baptists. Bixler was a Congregationalist, and set to be the first president out of line. Trustees gingerly asked him if he might be willing to convert, to which he bluntly replied: “It would be unfortunate to change one’s religious affiliation for the sake of becoming a college president.”

Soon after his appointment, the fundamentalist Sunday School Times sharply commented: “It is a strange proceeding to go to the Unitarian theological school at Harvard for the head of a Christian institution.” The Times editorial was circulated among the Maine Baptist ministers, about to gather for a conference in Waterville. Frank Johnson arranged for Bixler to be their keynote speaker. Bixler talked about his friend Schweitzer, and noted Schweitzer’s life was “lived against a background indistinguishable from the Unitarian.” In their enthusiasm for the work of Schweitzer, Bixler recalled, “the ministers forgot to ask embarrassing theological questions and the meeting broke up happily.”

The new president had exercised the wit and charm that would serve him well, from faculty meetings where discussions were not usually very funny, to sessions with irate alumni with better ideas about how to run the College. Using humor as a tool, he put listeners into his pocket, and then carried them toward the more erudite things. A young reporter covering one of his lectures for the local newspaper once wrote a story more about his riveting and hu-
amous introduction than the essence of his talk. Typically gracious, Bixler wrote to thank him and ended by saying: “You may have missed my point.” Well, of course, he had missed it—by a mile. Bixler’s humor had a strong bent toward the pun (rivaled only by the elegantly mustached latter-day registrar, George Coleman, who could break up any meeting to a chorus of groans). The story went around that someone once asked the philosopher president if he thought life was worth living. “That depends,” Bixler answered with a twinkle, “upon the liver.”

Like his predecessor, Bixler began his presidency in the worst of times. Johnson came with the Great Depression; Bixler came in 1942, in the midst of war. But like Johnson, Bixler was well suited to his time and place. His task, as he and others agreed, was to lead the completion of the new campus and build an academic reputation to match. To help enhance Colby’s standing, his wife, Mary, was a full partner, especially in the bolstering of the neglected areas of art and music. The Bixlers’ love of the arts led to the development of revitalized academic departments and an infusion of the arts in the broader community. Mary Bixler, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Smith, held a master’s degree in philosophy from Columbia. She was a gifted violist, and a driving force in the formation of the Colby Community Symphony Orchestra, in which the Bixlers were faithful participants.

Given his choice, Bixler would have devoted full time to his academic interests, and engaged with faculty and students in a life of the mind. Like Johnson, he would have liked to leave the business of asking for money to others. Johnson had no choice, and paid a price. Many students of his era said they didn’t know him. Bixler, with help from a fledgling development office, managed to do both.

He never got comfortable “traveling with the begging bowl.” In 1984 when he was gravely ill and staying with his daughter Nancy Isaacs in Weston, Massachusetts, President William “Bill” Cotter and his wife, Linda, paid a visit. Bixler, who held his sense of humor despite failing health, told the Cotters he was being haunted by two recurring nightmares. In the

8. Ever the gracious hostess to faculty, students, and visiting alumni, Mary Bixler customarily visited the wives of new faculty members and knitted toys for the new babies. Each year the Bixlers made certain every senior was invited to the President’s House for an evening of dining, lively conversation and, of course, music.
first, he said, he was taking his Ph.D. oral examination and was being asked to outline and critique the ideas of all the major philosophers from the beginning of time. In the second, he dreamed he was being asked to go on a fundraising trip for Colby.

While his era was marked by the continued development of the physical plant, he would most especially be remembered for his strengthening of the faculty and curriculum. He could make a good case for more bricks, but the case for the liberal arts was his mantra. “The real sign of a liberally educated mind,” he once said, “is its freedom. Its zest for the life of free inquiry is not hampered by custom, convention, or prejudice. The liberally educated mind is inventive and experimental. It meets unexpected challenges quickly and is not afraid to blaze new trails when facing new problems.” Mark Benbow (English), one of the stars Bixler brought to the faculty, said Bixler reminded the faculty always to “inquire whether what we were doing was just within the tradition of the liberal arts. This was the theme upon which he was ready to fight in word and deed, and we became better scholars and better teachers, better human beings because he encouraged us to inquire.”

By the time Bixler arrived there were the beginnings of a supporting cast in the business of finding institutional support. Trustees themselves had gotten used to “high-class begging” and were already chasing prospects for the upcoming Fulfillment Campaign. On the staff were at least a few seasoned in the art of asking. Alan Lightner, the Colby point man with the fundraising firm of Marts and Lundy, signed on as assistant to the president in 1940 and, as a company man, continued to glean funds for a fledgling endowment even while getting money for bricks. In 1952 John Pollard became the first director of development; a year later Edward Turner arrived to lead the effort for another two decades and more. Lightner stayed on as goodwill ambassador, president’s assistant, and fundraiser until 1961.

Working to help Bixler warm the circuits with alumni was G. Cecil Goddard ’29. Until 1938 there had been a dual alumni organization. Goddard kept touch with the men, and Joe Smith’s wife, Ervena Goodale Smith ’24, was secretary for the alumnae. Goddard somehow managed to raise $300,000 for the Roberts Union and Ervena Smith got $100,000 from a much smaller body of alumnae for the building that became Runnals Union. In 1939 the two organizations merged into one, and Goddard was named alumni secretary. By 1950 he, like Lightner, was an assistant to the president.
Two other supporters appeared on the administrative scene in 1950 and each in his own way kept fences mended, both on and off the Hill. Ellsworth "Bill" Millett '25 was already well known when he replaced Goddard as alumni secretary. A stellar undergraduate athlete, he returned to the old campus in 1927 after two years of teaching and coaching at Waterville High. Millett's popularity reached deep to the Waterville community, making him the perfect host for summer open houses to show off the new campus. Like Bixler, he knew everybody's name, and he too was a humanist and as much beloved as any figure of his time. His work with alumni began on the campus where he was a specialist in rescuing undergraduates.9 Along the way, someone gave him the title as “Mr. Colby” and it stuck. In 1966 the newly acquired alumni house was named in his honor.

Richard Nye “Dick” Dyer came in 1950 to fill the large shoes of both Herbert C. Libby as editor of the Alumnus and Joseph Coburn Smith as chief of public relations. A tireless and loyal advocate for Colby, he developed strong ties to the regional media representatives and took the quality of the magazine to new heights. Thorough and precise, he was as demanding of others as he was of himself. (In one seven-year stretch he hired and fired twenty-two secretaries.) An inveterate saver, more than anyone Dyer preserved what could be moved from the old campus. He plagued higher-ups to find money to rescue artifacts, and he pestered librarians to organize the “Colbiana” collection. His loyalty led him to serve well as an assistant and confidant to three presidents.

Bixler's aversion to money extended to the balancing of the College budget. For that, he had A. Galen Eustis '23, a giant in the task of keeping the College afloat in the precarious years when academic support competed fiercely with the need to buy more bricks, and when capturing every new class of freshmen was an anxious adventure. Eustis came from Strong, Maine, and graduated from Colby at the top of his class. With a Harvard master's degree, he returned in 1926 to lead the department of business administration. At the age of twenty-three, he was elected as the youngest member of the Maine House of Representatives (a Republican of course). He became full professor and treasurer in 1938, and in 1950 the College’s first administrative vice president. Shrewd and

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9. One of those he rescued was Jack Deering '55, a Korean War air force veteran who left the downtown campus and felt out of place after returning to the new campus on the Hill. He was packing his belongings into the trunk of his car to leave school when Millett appeared and convinced him to stay. Deering became Colby's principal cheerleader in the Portland, Maine, sea of Bowdoin graduates, served as a College trustee, and received numerous alumni awards, including the Marriner Distinguished Service Award.
utterly devoted, he was as important to the development of the new campus as was his friend and architect, Jens Larson. Bixler once observed that his vice president's "down-to-earth shrewdness and astute realism was the perfect foil" for Johnson's "ebullient optimism." He might have said the same thing of his own relationship with the man.

The inherent tensions between thrifty money managers and thirsty faculty and students are legendary, and Eustis must have felt like the only saver in a sea of eager spenders. If he had a reputation for being tight, it was both deserved and understandable. The faculty was always asking for more money, even as students pressed demands for a social center, "with a dance floor, juke box, card tables and a soda fountain."

Even trustees made him nervous. At a single meeting in November 1945, the board voted to complete the buildings under construction, add two science buildings, two women's dormitories, and two fraternity houses. It was a brave move that thrilled Franklin Johnson, but the College didn't have half the money. It was Eustis who arranged for bank loans and waited anxiously for contributions to come in so he could pay the mounting bills.

If Eustis knew how to make the buffalos on the nickels of his day squeal, he also knew what motivated people. Ansel Grindall, who became director of physical plant in the 1970s, tells of a late winter day twenty years before, when he was a driver of the Blue Beetle. During a break, Grindall spotted a pile of coal outside Hedman Hall on the old campus and began shoveling it through an open window. Someone called out of the dusk: "Young man, what do you think you are doing?" It was Eustis. For one sinking moment Grindall thought perhaps he was shoveling coal into a faculty office. He explained he was simply keeping busy between runs. Eustis walked off without a word. The next week Grindall found a ten-cent-an-hour increase in his paycheck.

Against the genteel nature of the men he worked for, Eustis had the rougher instincts of a street fighter. In November 1950, the local Laborers' Union of the International Hod Carriers' Building and Common Laborers of America struck Colby and Thayer Hospital and took almost all of the construction workers with them. The organizer of the local union (no. 1284) was a Colby student, Paul Christopher '51. Christopher, who also worked as a laborer, told the student newspaper that "due to the increased cost of living in the Water-
ville area, one dollar per hour, making a take-home pay of approximately $37 a week, fails to keep life and limb together for the workers.” Laborers were making seventy-five cents an hour. Christopher convinced the union to ask for twice as much. Eustis offered the same dime he had given Grindall. A few workers picketed the construction sites on North Street and Mayflower Hill. Christopher was surprised that his fellow students—and most people in town—seemed uninterested. He was labeled a troublemaker. Bixler scolded him for being disloyal. Christopher, who lived with his wife, Alice, in the veterans’ apartments, felt threatened and feared he might be thrown out of school. Union leaders negotiated a new hourly rate of $1.25, a 66.6 percent increase. When the strike ended, Eustis seized a page of the Alumnus. His message seethed. “Although in excess of $5 million in construction has been carried on at Colby over a period of several years,” he wrote, “the College did not have any labor troubles until November of this year.” He made sure alumni knew the cost of the settlement was about $20,000.

Also at Bixler’s right hand was Ernest Marriner ’13. As listeners to his weekly radio program could attest, he was a Mainer through and through, and his down east accent was undiluted. He taught at Hebron for a time and represented the academies as a speaker at the Colby Centennial in 1920. Three years later he joined the College staff as librarian and professor of English. He was one of a half-dozen faculty members who ran the College during Prexy Roberts’s last illness. He served as the first dean of men (1929–47) and first dean of faculty, a position he held for a decade until his retirement in 1957. Thereafter, until his death in 1983, he served as College historian. Before the era of multiple deans, Marriner was known simply as “the dean.” His service to the community and the state included fifteen years on the local board of education until 1947 when he became a founding member of the state board of education. For more than two decades he was a moderator of the First Baptist Church and a trustee of the Waterville Public Library and Thomas College.

The entire senior administrative contingent was crowded into Miller Library, including the student deans, George T. Nickerson ’24, who succeeded Marriner, and Barbara Sherman, twelfth in a line of deans of women that began in 1896. Until the buildings and grounds department got its own home, superintendent Willard Jennison carved out space in the library as well. Jennison resigned in 1955, and George Whalon took his place. Whalon had a remarkable campus presence, far beyond the scope of his position. He and his wife, Helen, lived on the campus. His big, green Land Rover was everywhere. A dog lover and consummate storyteller, he took care of his crew, and they adored him. He embraced faculty and staff alike, especially the newcomers,
whom he sometimes supplied with discarded College furniture or shop-made sandboxes for their children. Students liked him and they amused him. One winter, short of the manpower to cart firewood to the dormitory fireplaces, Whalon put a sign near the woodpile: "Property of Colby College: Keep Off." By spring, the wood was gone. On hearing the story, a trustee quipped that Whalon ought to be made professor of philosophy. 

10. Three years after his death in 1970, the College established a George E. Whalon Memorial Grove surrounding Johnson Pond.

HOUSEKEEPING

Good Housekeeping magazine published an annual Report on Small Colleges in the early 1950s, naming 125 colleges recommended to parents and students. The measurements were financial stability, quality of the faculty, adequacy of the library, and the percentage of students going on to graduate school. It was the first of the magazine ratings that would soon popularize and proliferate, debunked by colleges not included and hyped to the sky by those that were. Bowdoin and Bates were on the Good Housekeeping list. Colby was not. Bixler knew why, and he struggled mightily to raise the intellectual tone of the place. It would take money, and money was in short supply. The subsidized GIs were mostly gone; the flood of "war babies" hadn't arrived. Inflation had eaten into the already meager endowment, and uncertain times and a growing tax rate had closed the wallets of philanthropists.

Bad enough the tides were running in the wrong direction, but forward progress had to be made against a growing chorus of questions about the value of the liberal arts. Traditionalists wanted the curriculum to stay put. Others were bent on change. Some thought small colleges had already sold their souls. "The ivory tower has become the irreverent symbol of a decadent system of higher education," the Good Housekeeping article quoted others as saying, even while claiming it wasn't so. The problem, the piece said, is that colleges had "become increasingly concerned with the development of skills and experiences essential in modern society."

Liberal arts champion Bixler knew the toughest fight was in his own backyard. "Ask a student why he chose a college of liberal arts rather than a technical school and the chances are he will be unable to tell you," he wrote, adding that the undergraduate was not alone in his embarrassment. "Even alumni have been known to quail before the effort to explain what their training did for them."
Colby's traditional curriculum always had things sticking out on the edges that were concerned with developing "skills and experiences essential in modern society." The ROTC was one, though half the requirement was centered on the liberal arts. The short-lived Division of Nursing and Medical Technology had been another, an obvious hedge against declining enrollments. Nowhere was skill-building more elegantly expressed than in the department of business administration, with its courses in accounting, finance, investments, marketing, shorthand, and typing.

While in the first half of the twentieth century Colby had prepared preachers, and by the second half it was churning out teachers, by the 1950s it was also making movers and shakers in the world of business and industry.11 Despite the department's successes, purists saw it as a misfit. Shorthand and typing were the first to go; then, to make it sound better, the department name was changed to Administrative Science. It could run from its detractors, but it could not hide. Eventually, in 1989, it was wrapped into the strong economics department and lost its status as a major course of study altogether.

While students were eager for immediately practical instruction and flocked to get free equipment lessons offered by the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, Bixler was looking in another direction. He could get there, he knew, by improving the size, shape, and credentials of the faculty. In 1950 the highest earned degree of most of the faculty was the master's. Only 23 of 75 held the terminal Ph.D. or M.B.A. degree. Bixler wanted new teachers to have Ph.D.'s, and hiring doctors was pricey.

Thirteen newcomers arrived in the fall of 1950, a fifth of the full faculty, and the number of replacements and additions accelerated through the decade. Gone were names tied to the earlier campus: William "Wilkie" Wilkinson, history; George Parmenter, chemistry; and Webster "Bugsy" Chester, the "father" of Colby biology. A few of the old-timers made it up the Hill, but they were no more than settled when they too began to leave. Carl Weber, renowned Thomas Hardy scholar, stayed on a bit to build the College's impressive collection of rare books and manuscripts. Retirements included Edward "Eddie Joe" Colgan, at Colby since 1924 and the educator of hundreds of secondary school teachers; Herbert "Pop" Newman '18, beloved director of religious ac-

11. Business-trained graduates came to rank among the most ardent and active alumni. At the end of the century, more than a dozen of the alumni serving on the board of trustees were trained in the world of commerce. Six were business administration or administrative science majors: Lawrence Pugh '56, Douglas Schair '67, Joseph Boulos '68, John Zacamy '71, Edson Mitchell '75, and Andrew Davis '85.

THE 1950S
tivities and the last strong official tie to the College's Baptist roots; Lester Weeks, a stalwart in chemistry; and Gordon Gates '19, a short-timer (1948–51) whose reputation in the classroom was exceeded only by his fame as the world's finest expert on the unlikely subject of earthworms.

Older veterans stayed at the expanding center of power. Weber, who led the English department for three decades, issued control to Alfred King Chapman '25, the last true despotic chair. When the Division of Languages, Literatures and Arts was renamed the Humanities, “Chappie” ruled there as well. He lived for a time in Roberts Union where he could keep an eye on his beloved DKE house across the street. His rotund figure, cigarette ashes collecting on his generous shirtfront, was a morning fixture in the Spa, sipping coffee, surrounded by students.

The English department claimed two of the faculty's thirteen women. Luella Norwood was the only female full professor when she retired in 1953. Alice Comparetti had been teaching since 1936. Mark Benbow, arriving in 1950, was the first among more than a half-dozen newcomers in English. Before long, upper-class students and alumni were saying a Colby education was incomplete without having taken Benbow’s course on Shakespeare. John Sutherland and Richard Cary came within two years, followed by Irving Suss, whose great contribution was in the inspiration of spectacular student theater. Ed Witham '52 came to help Suss two years after his graduation. The English department was further enriched with the arrival of Colin MacKay and Eileen Curran.

Although Galen Eustis worked full-time as vice president, he continued to lead the teaching of business administration. Arthur Seepe, who replaced Eustis as treasurer, taught with him. Walter Zukowski was a new instructor and was a popular figure in the department for more than thirty years. Eustis died of a heart attack in 1959, his death hastened by the strain of work. When the new administration building was opened the following year it was named, perfectly, in his memory. Ralph S. “Roney” Williams '35 took Eustis’s three roles as Wadsworth Professor, chair of the department, and vice president. While he reflected the frugal approach of his mentor, he kept stronger ties to the faculty and exercised a lesser influence over the presidents he served.

Walter Breckenridge had come to Colby with his dear friend Chappie in 1928 and played a similarly strong role in economics and as chair of the social sciences. “Eccy with Brecky” was not for the fainthearted—or for anyone up

12. In the early 1960s Williams took out foul-weather insurance to protect against lost revenues from home football games, and for a couple of rainy autumns made more than would have come through the gate.
late the night before. He arrived for morning class with a single piece of chalk and lectured nonstop for the full fifty minutes. Bob Pullen '41, heir apparent as vice president, was Breckenridge's partner in economics. Robert Barlow was the new star. Kingsley Birge led sociology, a discipline then tied with economics. Newcomers were Frederick Geib and Jonas Rosenthal, who in ten years became dean of students.

The study of sociology was by then barely fifty years old, and Colby claimed a tie to its founding. Albion Woodbury Small '76 returned to teach five years after his graduation and in 1889 became Colby's ninth president, the first Colby graduate. It was Small who established the co­ordinate college, against the wishes of a growing faction in 1890 that wanted to get rid of the “girls” altogether. He served only four years before being lured to the University of Chicago where he led the nation's first department of sociology. His work there earned him the honorific “Father of American Sociology.”

John McCoy taught German and chaired the modern language department, his clout multiplied by the power of his additional job as the dictator of class and exam scheduling. Veteran colleagues included Everett Strong and Gordon Smith (French) and Philip Bither '30 (German). Newcomers were Richard Kellenberger (French) and Henry Schmidt (German), soon followed by Archilles Biron (French) from Rutgers where he directed the Colby-Swarthmore School of Languages, Henry Holland, and Francisco Cauz (Spanish).

In the beginning, the art and music departments got by with only two teachers. James Carpenter came from the Harvard faculty to replace department founder Sam Green and worked alone until 1956, when William Miller joined him. Ermanno Comparetti, recruited from the faculty at Waterville High School, handled all of the music until Peter Ré arrived in 1951 to be College organist and director of the glee clubs and choir.

Archibald Allen came to teach classics in mid-decade and, with the help of a single instructor, offered two dozen courses in Greek and Latin. Norman Smith comprised the entire education department, picking up from Eddie Joe Colgan and teaching five courses and a seminar. Psychology soon tripled in size. Parker Johnson, a mover in the arena of curriculum innovation, joined the department in 1955 and later became dean of faculty. James MacKinnon Gillespie arrived in 1951 and resided in a faculty apartment. Gillespie ("Mr. G")
was a favorite with students. He ended his career as associate dean of students; from his tiny Lovejoy office, he delighted recalcitrant students by assigning them colorful and irreverent nicknames. An opera aficionado and a talented pianist, he might have taught music in addition or instead.

Paul Fullam, supported by young instructors (including Frederick Gillum and Clifford Berschneider), offered no fewer than twenty-six courses in history and government. Harold "Hal" Raymond, a respected Civil War historian, came in 1952. The end of the decade saw the arrival of Albert Mavrinac with the rare opening appointment of full professor in government. David Bridgman, a brilliant historian, signed on as an instructor; sadly, illness forced him to retire in midcareer.

Bixler himself taught courses in philosophy and religion; when "Pop" Newman retired, Clifford Osborn continued on as chaplain and teacher. John Clark and a newcomer, Richard Gilman, swung the department's weight to philosophy. Two outstanding teachers, Robert Reuman and Gustave Todrank, joined the department in 1956. Over the years each acquired legions of student disciples and taught courses also on the "must take" list that defined a complete Colby education. Adding more luster to the department was Yeager Hudson, who arrived at decade's end.

The new faculty members joined a line of predecessors with broad academic reputations, most evident in the sciences. The biologist Gates, with his thorough knowledge of earthworms, was followed by Allan Scott, a seasoned teacher from Union College with ties that continued at the Marine Biological Laboratories at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Beloved by generations of students, Scott was every inch the measure of those who taught before. He and Robert Terry soon began to make biology one of the College's strongest departments. Evans Reid and Paul Machemer joined veteran teacher Wendell Ray to bring similar new strengths in chemistry.

The math department entered the 1950s under the leadership of Wilfred Combellack and an accomplished graduate, Lucille Pinette (Zukowski) '37. The department was inspired by the preeminence of a former student, Marston Morse '14, a Waterville native recognized worldwide for his work on the calculus of variations in the large. (In addition to other more useful things, he

13. Mavrinac was a star, an example of the new breed of teacher-scholars. U.S. presidential historian and commentator Doris Kearns Goodwin '64 would later say that he was her "hero."

14. In 1967–68, while Parker Johnson was on sabbatical, Reid served a term as acting dean of faculty.
had shown that by the adroit application of the principles of dynamics, a single game of chess could be extended forever.) Morse had gone from Colby to Harvard and then to teach at various American universities before joining Albert Einstein as an associate at the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he was Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor and, on appointment by President Truman, a director of the National Science Foundation.

In physics, the torch was passed from Sherwood Brown to Dennison Bancroft, both worthy successors of the remarkable teacher and researcher William A. Rogers. In 1890 Rogers was the first to occupy the Shannon Building on the old campus, a structure he helped to design. In the single laboratory that occupied the entire tiny first floor, he developed the standard yard measure for the U.S. Bureau of Standards (by counting wave lengths of sodium light), a noteworthy achievement made all the more enduring by the impact of the yardstick on the bottoms of generations of misbehaving American youngsters.

Donaldson Koons was the geology department. On deck since 1946, he enjoyed the respect and affection of generations of students. Charles Hickox doubled the department in 1957, and at the very end of the decade its ranks were further bolstered by the arrival of Harold Pestana. Geology (early on including geography) also had a distinguished lineage and through the 1950s was sending more students on to graduate school than any other. Ezekiel Holmes ‘24 opened the department in 1833. As a student he discovered some of the state’s first tourmaline deposits on Mount Mica. Justin Loomis became chair in 1836 and left three years later to become president of Bucknell University. Edward Perkins ‘66 chaired the department while serving as state geologist, and George Otis Smith ‘93, chairman of the board of trustees during the early years of the move to the Hill, was for twenty-three years director of the U.S. Geological Survey before being named chairman of the Federal Power Commission.

15. Throughout most of the 1940s, Brown was a teaching colleague of William T. Bovie, inventor of the electrosurgical knife that, to this day, remains in use and bears his name. A native of Fairfield, Bovie began work on his invention at his home on Summit Street before joining the Harvard faculty as a physicist with the University’s Cancer Commission. The Bovie knife was patented in 1926, and Bovie sold his rights to the invention for one dollar. When Harvard denied him tenure, he returned to Maine and taught at Colby from 1939 to 1948.

16. The campus Perkins Arboretum and Bird Sanctuary is named in memory of Perkins and his wife. The twenty acres of woodland were dedicated in 1959 and were later designated and protected by the state as a game management area.
By the end of the decade the teaching faculty swelled to 103. Although the newcomers were homogenous in many respects—all white, mostly men and mostly Protestant—taken together the faculty was in other ways enriched in scholarship (nearly half had a terminal degree); and it included many teachers whose reputations served as a magnet for attracting an ever-stronger student body. In the matter of strengthening teaching, Bixler had begun to achieve what he set out to do.

**TESTING NEW WATERS**

Students and faculty returning each fall became accustomed to seeing new buildings sprouting like mushrooms. Averill and Johnson Halls opened in the fall of 1950, and all the men were finally on the Hill. Mary Low and Louise Coburn dorms were almost finished. The Keyes Science Building finally opened in 1951, albeit crowded, awaiting the 1952 opening of the Life Science Building when four fraternity houses—Delta Upsilon, Zeta Psi, Phi Delta Theta, and Tau Delta Phi—were on line as well. New campus features were not limited to buildings. Summer educational programs burgeoned and the College began collecting fine art. And on top of all that, there were three white ducks.

In 1948, on the day Johnson Pond was dedicated, Frank Johnson had gleefully rowed around the man-made lake in a small boat. After that, except for the occasional splashes of veterans’ children jumping off a small wooden dock built at the edge near the road, the pond was calm. The only living things on the water were gulls taking a break from the local dump, a few wild mallards, and an occasional common loon, sadly off course. The newcomers were gifts of Maine author John Gould, who convinced Bixler of the ornamental attraction of having ducks in residence: Indian Runners “with a posture more like a penguin than a goose,” Gould said. He wrote in the Christian Science Monitor: “Dr. Bixler is a highly cultured man, intellectualized right up to the last notch, and he knows more about everything than I ever will. Except ducks. He is ignorant on ducks. I knew that right away, because he said: ‘I think it would be a fine idea.’ The story went around the campus that Bixler had asked for bucks but got sent ducks.”

Although the birds were fine bucolic props for photographs, having them around was not easy. In the fall when decent domestic ducks were in a barn, Colby’s were left for B & G (buildings and grounds) workers to round up.

17. In 1950 there were a dozen.
They were always uncooperative and ungrateful, and the sight of posses with nets inevitably gave rise to speculation that some folks were getting free Thanksgiving dinners.

Not every duck on the Hill liked the pond. In 1965, Deborah Anglim '65, Marcia Norling '66, and Diane Fullerton '66 bought a duckling at a local pet store. Having taken no course in anatomy, they named him Esther. His namesake was star swimmer Esther Williams, but having been raised in the more or less dry confines of Coburn Hall, he didn't care for water. Instead, Esther bonded with his owners and followed them to classes, to the Spa, and to the bookstore. With spring vacation in sight and Esther fast becoming more than a duckling, they decided to release him in the pond. He could go to the afternoon baseball game, but after that he had to leave. They borrowed a canoe and put him overboard in the middle of the pond—several times. Each time he swam fretfully to the bank and waddled after them. At last the women escaped and walked sadly back to Coburn Hall. After supper they got a call. Esther was in the ATO house, watching television.

A better-sounding new feature of 1950 was a baroque pipe organ for the chapel. The gift of trustee Matthew Mellon, the instrument was made in Germany by E. F. Walcker. Its design met the specifications of Bixler's friend Albert Schweitzer who resisted the trend toward making organs sounding like full orchestras. Schweitzer and Bixler wanted the Lorimer organ to play music of Bach, polyphonic rather than harmonic.\(^\text{18}\) Even with the new feature, that fall a student fussed in a letter to the Echo that student participation at chapel was dismal. The organ piped in one of the first special summer education programs, the Church Music Institute, cofounded in 1955 by modern language professor Everett Strong, organist of the First Congregational Church in town; and Rutgers University professor Thomas Richner, organist of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston. Strong died in 1976 and Richner con-

\(^{18}\) Eighteen years later, with a grant from the Louis Calder Foundation, the organ was completely dismantled and all 2718 pipes, ranging in length from seventeen feet to a quarter-inch, were revoiced. Nearly half were replaced. A series of further improvements were made through the late 1990s, when the heaviest of the pipes, made of poor German postwar steel, began to show sagging feet.
tinued for a total of forty-two summers. In 1989 the program was renamed the Richner-Strong Institute of Church Music.

Summer programs had begun in 1947 when Roney Williams joined the faculty with extra marching orders to find ways to keep the plant running through the summer, to avoid layoffs and make a little money. Williams partnered with Dr. F. T. Hill to develop postgraduate medical courses. The first, the Institute on Hospital Administration, began in 1954. The most prestigious was the Lancaster Course in Ophthalmology, developed by Hill and his brother, Howard, who both had worldwide reputations as eye surgeons. Soon, medical training was offered in a variety of other specialties, forming the centerpiece of a summer enterprise sufficient to prompt the American Medical Association to make Colby the only nonmedical college in the country certified to award AMA accreditation.

When Bill Macomber '27 arrived in 1954 as the first full-time director of adult education and extension, the summer was already filling up. Macomber and his wife and Colby classmate, Peg, lived in Roberts Union and managed an expanding number of summer programs and a series of winter evening "extension" courses for area citizens. Over time, additional programs ranged from Great Books to library science and from occupational safety to coaching. For undergraduates, there was the Colby-Swarthmore School of Languages, created in 1948 and comanaged by Edith Phillips of Swarthmore and John Franklin McCoy of Colby. In 1955 it became a Colby program, with McCoy as director. It was discontinued in 1968 when college students had begun to travel abroad.

The testing of new waters ranged into the undergraduate program. When James Carpenter joined the art department in 1950, he had little in the way of support beyond his own considerable enthusiasm. The College owned few works of fine art, and students studied mostly from slides and prints that Carpenter exhibited in most unlikely places. By the end of the decade there were plans for an art and music building, to include modest gallery space. There

19. Enrollment in the medical programs flourished through the years when the Internal Revenue Service permitted full tax deductions for the cost of educational advancement. Physicians and their families came from around the nation and the world, rented camps on the nearby lake and homes in town, and enjoyed Maine vacations while earning continuing education credit. Many of their children eventually returned as students. The IRS tightened the rules in the late 1980s, and the number of participants began to decline.
was neither artwork nor money enough for more, but there were a few who had bigger dreams. Among them were Bangor sisters Adeline and Caroline Wing who had been students of Bixler’s uncle and Smith College President L. Clark Seelye. In 1951 the Wings began to make anonymous gifts of works by important American artists: William Merritt Chase, Childe Hassam, Winslow Homer, and Andrew Wyeth.

During a visit to France in the early 1950s, the Wing sisters came across a chateau in Maintenon. It was being torn down and the sisters took a liking to the fireback rescued from Madame de Maintenon’s private apartment. They bought it and shipped it home. When the President’s House was being built, they offered it to Colby. Bixler later quipped that as long as the house lasts Colby presidents “will look straight at the scene that greeted so often the eyes of Louis Quatorze.”

In 1956 Ellerton and Edith Jetté multiplied the tiny collection with the gift of their American Heritage Collection of one hundred primitive paintings, watercolors, and drawings. The gift was intended for students to use in conjunction with courses, but there was no place to show them. Some of the primitive portraits were hung on the high-paneled walls of baronial Foss Dining Hall where their crude faces with following eyes looked sternly down upon the occasional food fight. Students were not universally fond of them, but in time the works became the core of one of the nation’s best college collections of early American art.

Willard Howe Cummings and his mother, Helen Warren Cummings ’11, donated a collection of American folk and fine art in 1957, and with the Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer Collection of Winslow Homer paintings (placed on permanent loan in 1949), and the Eugene Bernat Collection of Oriental Art, the College’s art holdings moved into the realm of the respectable. Cummings was well known as a portrait painter,20 and in the spring of 1959 began work on a portrait of Bixler. On one of his visits to campus he suggested to Ed Turner,

20. His many subjects included Pablo Casals, Adlai Stevenson, and the actress Bette Davis (who later gave her portrait to the College). A founder of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Cummings led in the development of the school as a recognized center for talented young artists.
the new vice president for development, that an organization of art supporters be formed to help develop the new College art program. Turner and Bixler readily agreed and the Friends of Art organization was formed that year with Edith Jetté as its first chair.

As the faculty grew in number and strength, Bixler found many allies in the effort to improve the overall learning milieu. A Book of the Year program was established in 1949, and the first selection was Lecomte du Nouy’s *Human Destiny*. While some thought it was a bit controversial (and heavy going), the bookstore sold 264 copies to an enrollment of one thousand. Librarian James Humphrey assured Bixler that each copy was certainly read by more than one student.

The Colby chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was formed that year and was the genesis of a number of educational reforms and innovations. In 1953 the chapter supported the faculty-initiated Senior Scholars Program, providing special partnerships for top students with faculty in writing, research, and special projects. The chapter later pressed for a required graduation examination within the majors (comprehensives). Both the AAUP and the Academic Council (full professors only) were forces in shaping academic policy; by the 1970s, however, both had faded in importance. The AAUP would later revive itself with an agenda bent more toward matters of faculty pay and privileges.

An elective cross-discipline course for freshmen, “Great Thinkers in the Western Tradition,” was created in 1954, and that year a select number of freshmen were chosen for a course in creative thinking taught by instructors of art, chemistry, mathematics, philosophy, and sociology. A second “Thinking” course was open to the upper classes. The required freshman English composition course was revised to develop writing skills based upon classic readings, and the department adopted Colin MacKay’s practice of requiring freshmen to write biweekly in-class themes. Reflecting the gradual increase in admissions standards, the sophomore writing course (reserved for those receiving a grade of D or worse in freshman English) was discontinued, and seminar sections were introduced for advanced students.

Bixler, of course, reveled in the scholastic improvements, and he loved nothing more than an “academic party,” focused on intellectual ideas and providing fodder for out-of-class discussion. He saw to it that an academic convocation was held at least once in every student generation. The celebrations began in 1947 with the first Religious Convocation, and continued with a series of additional academic convocations. The first (1953) had as its theme...
“The Liberal Arts in Illiberal Times.” A second, “The Rediscovery of the Individual” (1956), was radio broadcast live over America’s Town Meeting of the Air. In addition, there were three lecture series, made possible by George Averill, Guy Gabrielson, and Robert In Graham '51, invigorating the spaces between convocations, and bringing many distinguished speakers to the campus. The convocations were highly touted, and students got the day off to attend. Some did. Bixler said they were “not as responsive as they should be to many worthwhile issues.” In fact, he once told the trustees that students “while usually a joy individually, can often be a problem collectively.” They did not collectively attend the convocations, and by the end of the decade the class-suspending events were abandoned.

Bixler’s constant pushing for improvement of the curriculum got a boost in 1954 when the College received a grant from the Fund for the Advancement of Education, established by the Ford Foundation. The money was used for an internal study that urged broader offerings in art and music, and called for more combined majors and interdepartmental courses. It vindicated business administration, and it pressed the need to find a way to reduce the aversion of men to the foreign language requirement. It also urged faculty to eschew the “recitation” method of teaching and join the trend toward lecture and discussion.

The faculty began to chew on the recommendations almost immediately. The Division of General Studies and the former Division of Languages, Literatures, and Arts were melded into the Division of Humanities and included the department of philosophy and religion. Members also agreed to begin a separate listing of interdepartmental courses in the annual catalogue. Most sweeping was the adoption of new graduation (distribution) requirements. Previously students took two years of English, were required to reach the intermediate level in a foreign language, and took three yearlong courses in social sciences, and two in natural sciences. In the new order of things, students were expected to meet the same requirements in English and foreign language but needed only a single course in each of the divisions. The recommendations led to changes in the overall graduation requirements as well. Beginning in 1957 students needed a minimum of thirty-two grades of C or better in forty courses.

The Ford Foundation returned in 1956 with $432,000 more for faculty salaries, a handsome sum in the days when promotions and raises had much more to do with available funds than with merit. It was not the last time the Ford Foundation would favor Mayflower Hill.
When North Korean troops swarmed south to begin a war in June 1950, college students paid little attention. They believed as they had been told: World War II was the last war. Besides, if there was trouble in Korea (wherever Korea was), the United States was not alone in the fight. The United Nations was for the first time backing its peace role with men and weapons. More worrisome than Korea was the cold war against global communism. After all, there was the raging Joe McCarthy warning of Reds under their own beds, stark images of atom bombs, and all those lessons on how to “duck and cover.” The cold war was to last forty years. The one in Korea was over in three.

Soon after World War I, the National Defense Act (1920) created the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). When World War II came, ROTC programs at the land-grant universities gave a more measured approach to the draft, and the government was content to build manpower reserves while cadets continued their studies. When the Korean War began, the most vulnerable students were the dwindling number of World War II veterans. Most had already passed through. Only two new GIs entered Colby in the fall of 1950; about one hundred were in the upper classes.

The College’s most immediate military role was with the area civil defense program, operating the radiological section of the mobile battalion for the Augusta area. Physics professor Sherwood Brown was in charge. Waterville’s city clerk, Charles “Chick” Nawfel, took on an extra assignment as CD director, writing in the 1950 City Report: “For the third time in the span of the lives of some of us we will again put down the plow, take up the rifle, and go to war.” His local arsenal comprised a single police cruiser.

The war began with no draft, but men over eighteen were required to register with their local boards. “Ask Not For Whom the Bugle Calls; It Calls Thee,” the Echo headlined. Twenty-three left for the armed forces at the end of the first semester, 1950. Seoul fell again and President Truman fired General McArthur. The faculty, worried that the male enrollment would plummet, once again agreed to offer a full semester of work over the summer. In the spring Truman said students in good standing would receive deferments. With patriotic memories of the last war still fresh, many did not want to be excused. Frank Piacentini ’53, a popular athlete, wrote to the Echo to say he felt like a slacker. “Simply because a fellow doesn’t have the money to go to college,” he said, “is no reason why he should have to go in the service before anyone else.”
The fledgling U.S. air force had by then created several campus officer-training programs and was inviting interest in more. Many Colby students thought it was a good idea. The faculty wasn’t so sure, but voted (29 to 19) to support an application. Sixty-five colleges were chosen; Colby was one. In the fall of 1951 all men students were required to take two years of basic military training, and would be commissioned as second lieutenants upon graduation.

Uniforms, including all but underwear and handkerchiefs, were issued upon deposit of fifteen dollars at the treasurer’s office, and the new Cadet Corps was organized into four squadrons, subdivided into flights. Offices were ensconced in the new Keyes Science Building, and drills were held on the athletic fields or, if the weather was bad, in the fieldhouse. On occasion marching units strayed from the athletic fields and onto the walkways of the central campus where cadence calls became a familiar accompaniment to classroom lectures.

In the spring of 1952 the cadets marched down Waterville’s Main Street, the smartest unit in the Armed Forces Day (May 18) parade. In mock presidential elections that fall, students picked the eventual victor, Dwight Eisenhower (74 percent) over Adlai Stevenson. Eisenhower was elected on a promise to go to Korea and find a peace. On July 27, 1953, the United States, North Korea, and China signed the armistice leaving the embattled country oddly divided along the 38th parallel. Two Colby graduates, Charles Graham ’40 and John Thomson ’51, gave their lives in the war.

ROTC continued, strong as ever. In 1955 the program was expanded on a voluntary basis and cadets staffed what was claimed to be the only college ground observation post in the country. From the tower room of Lorimer Chapel, more than one hundred students worked in two-man shifts from midnight to dawn, looking for enemy planes. The watching post was tied by telephone to a “Filter Center” at Dow Air Force Base in Bangor that sometimes sent decoys overhead to test the student watchers.

The success of the Colby ROTC program was quickly evident. In 1956 the College was cited for having not a single graduate candidate “wash out” of flight school. In that same year air force authorities accepted recommendations from Bixler and the faculty for sweeping changes in the ROTC requirements. Separate military courses for freshmen and sophomores were combined into a single freshman course. The sophomore course, approved for ROTC credit, was the traditional introductory course in philosophy. All sophomore men (except veterans) and any woman who signed up took a course called “Logic, Ethics, and Political Theory.” Bixler loved it. “We shall have more
'philosophizing' on the campus than ever before,” he said. The Pentagon loved it too, and said other colleges should follow the Colby lead.21

In the midst of the war, Maine had a brief battle of its own. When NBC TV’s Today Show went on the air for the first time in January 1952, its weather forecast wasn’t of much use in Maine. Dave Garroway and the local Sentinel for Saturday, February 16, predicted “occasional light snow,” good for Winter Carnival Weekend. Overnight, strong northeast winds circled a low-pressure area off the Carolinas and roared into Maine where the storm met cold Canadian air and stalled—a classic nor’easter. By Sunday morning, the storm had dumped a century-record twenty-eight inches of snow on central Maine. Heavy winds tossed flakes into drifts ten feet high and more.

Monday morning, grounds supervisor Ansel Grindall walked from his home in Winslow and to Stedman’s Taxi Stand at the Elmwood Hotel. They laughed when he asked for a cab. It took him two hours to walk up the Hill, often lying down to roll over drifts. He arrived to find the College’s lone plow truck, an Army surplus 6 X 6, had been left outside. The crew put chains on all six wheels and began plowing. It took four days to clear the roads and parking lots. By Tuesday buildings were low on heating oil, and Grindall plowed Mayflower Hill Drive for a delivery tanker that had somehow made its way from Searsport to Central Fire Station, but could go no farther.

Classes were suspended for two days. Students dug tunnels through snow piled up in front of entryways. Dave Roberts ’55 remembers jumping out of windows on the second floor of Averill Hall. His wife-to-be, Ruth McDonald ’55, fearing she might be buried and lost in the drifts, wallowed from West Quad to Mary Low where, with help from Dean Sherman, she and others prepared meals. When desserts ran low, a local ice cream maker, Whitcomb Rummel, delivered forty gallons on horseback. After the roads were opened, some braved a walk downtown to see Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs at the State Theater.

Students, of course, relished time off from classes, but when the sap ran in the spring they were eager for another escape. Since the early 1930s, Arbor Day had given the excuse. The observance was Frank Johnson’s idea, and students pitched in with free labor to plant, rake, and clean. By the early 1950s students continued to embrace the notion of a short break, but their ardor for cleaning

21. ROTC became optional in 1959; and, with student interest dwindling, the 1965 federal Vitalization Act gave trainees the opportunity to receive commissions after only two years of training.
up and planting trees had withered. Fewer stayed on campus to work; more took the chance to lie in the sun or journey to the coast. Some faculty, whose spring lesson plans were wrecked by the blizzard hiatus, suggested the 1952 Arbor Day be cancelled. With renewed zeal for helping out, students found an unlikely ally in none other than Johnson, who told the Echo “a student may learn far more from a project of community cooperation like Arbor Day than he will ever lose by missing one lecture.” The conflict wound its way to the floor of the Faculty Meeting, where members were trapped. A vote to rescue a precious day of classes would also be a vote against the Man of Mayflower Hill. Discretion overcame valor. Members agreed to restore the special event, and went one better in recommending the day be named for Johnson himself.22

The 1952 snows melted barely in time for commencement. Ralph Bunche was the speaker, a substitute for U.N. Secretary-General Trygve Lie, forced to remain in New York. That summer Waterville celebrated its sesquicentennial, and local men became Brothers of the Brush, growing moustaches, full beards, goatees, and sideburns “to honor the pioneers who built our great city.” Jonas Salk had developed the polio vaccine, and nervous mothers soon began to let their youngsters return to the North Street swimming pool. A year later, the last Maine Central Railroad steam-powered locomotive, no. 470, made its final stop in Waterville, and the speedy diesel Yankee Clipper took its place. Eisenhower added the phrase “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance, and Martin Luther King Jr. accepted his first pastorate, at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, and began to lead peaceful boycotts of the city’s buses.

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Tragedy and scandal struck Colby in June 1953. The day before commencement a janitor discovered the body of a newborn baby, a cord around its neck, in a trunk in the storage room of Mary Low Hall. A senior confessed it was her child, delivered in secret the previous February. She pled innocent to a charge of murder, and on appeal in October, was fined $1,000 for concealing the birth of a child and sentenced to one to two years of “imprisonment at hard labor” at the women’s reformatory in Skowhegan for concealing its death.

22. The tradition continued under its new name until 1964 when it ended. It was resurrected briefly as Strider Day in 1979.
As the economic and social worlds bubbled, so did the politics of Maine. The state Democratic Party, out of power and out of the Blaine House governor’s mansion for two decades, began a revival. Two young attorneys, both navy veterans, led the recovery: Frank Coffin of Lewiston, who later served Maine in Congress and became Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit, and Edmund Muskie of Waterville. Coffin was elected state party chairman in 1954, and one of his volunteers and advisers was a fellow Lewiston resident, Donald Nicoll ’50. While working as a radio reporter, Nicoll had interviewed Coffin and was taken by his enthusiasm for rebuilding the party. Muskie reluctantly agreed to stand for the governorship against the incumbent Republican, Burton Cross. It was a greater challenge to find someone willing to run against the formidable Senator Margaret Chase Smith. Nicoll urged Coffin to approach his history professor, Paul Fullam; and Fullam finally agreed. ("I cannot refuse the call to be a candidate without repudiating everything I have taught.") He was unopposed in the June primaries, and the party geared up for a tough run in November. Coffin got permission from the state committee to raise money to hire an executive secretary; and when the first $1,000 pledge arrived, Nicoll quit his radio job and took the job.

Fullam, forty-seven, was inexperienced as a politician, but in the classroom he was, as Bixler put it, “scintillating.” As a candidate, he insisted his campaign would be conducted “on the highest principles of honor and decency,” saying that victory at any other price would be “a sorry bargain.” He kept his promise. Senator Smith, whose gracious demeanor belied the inner core of a political infighter, was ruthless. Muskie won. Fullam lost, and less than a year later died of a heart attack. At his funeral the new governor recalled that the professor politician “believed that there was no civilization in the world’s history that held out so much hope for a better life for the average man and woman as the one we enjoy here in America.”

NOT SO SILENT

There were conflicts between the “silent” label young people carried and the things that most attracted them. The generation born of war and depression was said to have no passionate causes of its own, yet many of them went to the front lines in the fight for civil rights. They favored an army general over an academic as their president, but they spawned peacemakers like Martin Luther King Jr. They were conservative in their choices of professions, but they embraced the rebellious music of rock ’n’ roll and Elvis Presley, cropped from the waist down for the Ed Sullivan Show, and they were hardly quiet at all.

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During the war, most students took their academic work seriously, and the era produced a number of fine students and outstanding alumni. (The College had five Fulbright Scholars from 1950 to 1953.) After Korea, increasing numbers viewed college as a nuisance to endure before exploring the enticing opportunities of “the real world.” For these students it was hard to focus on learning. Grades of C were just fine, thank you. The American Association of University Professors at Dartmouth couldn’t stand it any more. Just as James Dean’s Rebel Without a Cause was running in the nation’s theaters, the AAUP indulged in a bit of rebellion itself, charging that “deep-seated indifference, casual un-preparedness, and habitual absenteeism” threatened an institution’s very effectiveness as a center of higher learning. Time magazine chimed in, describing U.S. college students variously as “stodgy,” “docile,” and “inarticulate.”

Even the Echo crabbled about indifference. Responding to criticism that students were afraid to speak out, the newspaper created an “open forum” column and invited readers to prove the critics wrong. Ann (E. Annie) Proulx ’57 jumped at the offer, but her already polished pen sided with the critics. “As disgusting as the apathetic mental stagnation of at least 85 percent of the Colby student body (5 percent are actually numb), is the similarly stagnated 10 percent group of self-proclaimed intellectuals,” she seethed, claiming “this little group of the elite (of which I consider myself a passive member) cries often and loud there is no ‘mental stimulation’ here on campus, that there is no ‘thought,’ no appreciation of the fine things. It’s a rather pathetic situation.”

If there was a dearth of “intellectualism,” there was no shortage of after-class fun. Almost all of it ran on student energy. Except for the help of a few faculty and staff, College support was limited to a general endorsement and earnest oversight. The largest of all student institutions with some four hundred members, the Outing Club was long and well established. Its offerings had expanded in 1942 when the College purchased an old resort property on the shore of nearby Great Pond. Regular trips were conducted down the coast and up the mountains. The club sponsored the grand annual Winter Carnival, and its subdivision, the Colby Woodsmen, held an intercollegiate meet as a feature of Homecoming Weekend.

The drama club, Powder & Wig, tied both fun and a bit of intellectual stimulation. Cecil Rollins first linked drama to the curriculum in the mid-1920s. It languished until Eugene Jellison ’51, while still an undergraduate, pirated the thespians away, introducing theater-in-the-round, and leading students in ever more ambitious productions. The World War II veteran staged a number of plays in the early 1950s, including All My Sons, Murder in the Cathedral, The Crucible, and Mister Roberts, directed by future chair of the board
H. Ridgely Bullock ’55. Plays were produced in makeshift settings (usually in Averill Gymnasium) until 1955 when the B & G department moved into its new airplane hangar and an old farm building near the tennis courts was converted into a home for Powder & Wig. Trustee Frederic Camp put up half of the $5,000 cost, and the place was appropriately named the Little Theater.

Editorships of the yearbook, the Oracle (first published in 1867), and the newspaper, the Echo (since 1877) were envied prizes as were places with a cappella singing groups, the glee club, the orchestra, and the band. The Colby Eight was flourishing, singing on and off the campus, and at many weddings, including their own. (The era produced a remarkable number of weddings of Colby couples.) Almost every appearance included a performance of their trademark number, "Mood Indigo," purloined from the counterpart Meddbempsters at Bowdoin. The women's answer to the Eight, the Colbyettes, began in 1951. Janice "Sandy" Pearson founded the group, encouraged by the energetic glee club director, Peter Ré, who found them music ("It's a Grand Night for Singing," "Deep Purple," and so forth), and even wrote them a song, "Colbiana." The "Ettes" were beginning to perform with Ré's Glee Club and traveling with alumni secretary Bill Millett to club meetings in Maine.

Religious groups, the largest being the Student Christian Association, were expanded to include an interfaith association whose members ran the annual Campus Chest, a fund-raiser for local charities.

Students had agitated for a radio station since moving to the Hill. In the spring of 1951 physics professor Sherwood Brown worked with a new club, Radio Colby, and began testing a single-tone oscillator for a closed circuit station. Hugh Hexamer ’52 was the director. Henry Fales ’50, already graduated, assembled the transmitter. It was going to cost money to get things up and running, and the College dragged its feet. The Echo complained:

"The argument has been raised that Colby students should postpone such ambitious projects as a social center and campus radio station until the Mayflower Hill Development Fund is nearer completion, until the world situation is more clearly defined, until the Manpower Commission decides how many students will be transferred, until the future is brighter. Why didn’t our predecessors wait? Were world conditions so predictable in 1939 when Roberts Union was begun? Was Wall Street a stable, reassuring influ-

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23. The original "Ettes" were Pearson, Anne Fairbanks, and Carolyn English, from the Class of 1952; Virginia Falkenbury and Elaine Zervas, Class of 1953; and Georgia Roy, Dorothy Forster, Lorraine Walker, Dorothy Seller, and Natalie Harris, Class of 1954.
ence when Colby decided to move to Mayflower Hill? There is more to building a college than the symmetrical arrangement of bricks.

Still there was no station. In December 1953 Carleton Brown '33 gave students time on his local WTVL station, a half-hour weekly program "with the aim of binding firmer relationships between people of Waterville and the students on Mayflower Hill." Finally, at 7 P.M. on October 15, 1956, a bona fide campus radio station, WMHB, 660 on the dial, went live, not on the air but through the heating and water pipes. Reception was possible within 130 feet of Roberts Union, Miller Library, or the Women's Union. Peter Vlachos '58 built the system, carrying the sound through a newly laid pipeline. Bond Wheelwright '58 was the station manager. It didn't last long. There was interference from the growing number of refrigerators and television sets in the dorms, and students complained of hearing rock music over telephone dial tones. (A woman in Mary Low claimed to have picked up a hockey game on her electric toothbrush.)

The year 1956 also saw the College begin to move into the realm of educational television. The adventurer Brown pressed the trustees at Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin to head off "an interested party in Boston" and apply to the FCC for the Channel 10 license. Bates President Charles Phillips took the initiative in 1959. Colby and Bowdoin signed on as partners. WCBB (Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin) got its call letters the following year and went on the air in November 1961, only the sixth educational television station in the country, boasting of "full-scale black-and-white production" and coverage for two-thirds of the state.

Two honor societies, formed in the early days of the new campus, engaged in benevolent works. Cap and Gown came first and chose its membership from among senior women on vague criteria having to do with "contributions to the College and to the Women's Division." Blue Key, a society for men, began soon thereafter. New members were announced at an annual recognition assembly in Averill Gymnasium. New members were "tapped" one by one in the midst of whoops and cheers for those chosen and the palpable pain of those who were not. The societies were discontinued in the mid-1970s, as was the all-college awards assembly.

The Student Council was first in line to enforce the social rules: dances on Saturday night only, no alcohol, and no smoking on the dance floor. Separately, the Women's League, established in 1917, dealt with the many-times-multiplied rules for "girls." A visit to a men's college required written parental permission. Afternoon "calling hours" in the public rooms of the women's...
dormitories were from 1:30 to 5:00 P.M. (until 5:30 P.M. on the porches) and from 7:00 P.M. until closing in the evenings. "Chaperonage" was required for all mixed parties and in no case could the "girls" attend public dances in town. Only men could smoke on the streets of Waterville.

Then as always, parties were the business of the Greek fraternities. Sororities, with no houses and no party space, played a smaller role. By 1952, with six spanking-new brick houses facing one another on "frat row," fraternities were especially well suited for partying. Delta Upsilon (DU), Zeta Psi (Zete), and Tau Delta Phi (Tau Delt) joined DKE and ATO in 1951, and the sixth, Phi Delta Theta (Phi Delt), began the next year. Lambda Chi Alpha (LCA), struggling to raise money for a house that would not open until 1958, operated in the dormitories. Two additional fraternities brought the total to ten before the decade ended. Sigma Theta Psi, later affiliated with the national Alpha Delta Phi, opened in 1955, and Beta Chi, which became Pi Lambda Phi (Pi Lam), began in 1957. Both were housed in assigned space in the men's quadrangle.

Four sororities made it to the Hill, each with a room in Runnals Union. An old Maine blue law once prohibited sorority houses, and the Baptist-leaning College never disagreed. The oldest sorority was the Alpha Chapter of Sigma Kappa, founded at Colby in 1874 and a national sorority since 1904. Chi Omega began as a local sorority, Beta Phi, in 1895. The remaining two were established in 1904 as local societies that eventually affiliated with national sororities, Delta Delta Delta (Tri Delt) and Alpha Delta Pi (ADPi). A fifth sorority, Phi Mu, was founded in 1917. It folded during World War II.

Independent students were given the small first-floor Hangout in the west wing of Roberts Union—no competition for the fraternities, which had manpower, facilities, relaxed rules, and a greater zeal to party. Fraternities had yet another incentive. Until the late 1960s, pledging new members was a competitive business. Having the best parties was a boon in the critical game of "rushing" new members.

Under the aegis of the Greeks, 1950s social life was never more vibrant and, with an occasional notorious exception, never more healthy. Students complained little about the fare; authorities complained only a little bit more. Live bands, even at smaller parties, were commonplace. Gerry Wright, a talented local keyboard musician, played regularly at the DU House Saturdays after football games. The Echo touted Homecoming, Winter Carnival, and the Sadie Hawkins event for weeks in advance, building suspense over the selection of

24. The last fraternity to have a chapter house on the Hill, Kappa Delta Rho (KDR), waited until 1967 for its own place.
campus queens. Tau Delt helped with Winter Carnival, and the campus Chesterfield representative promised the queen a carton of cigarettes “either regular or the king-sized, according to her preference.” The Tri Delt sorority ran the annual Sadie Hawkins Dance, an event inspired by the campus speaking appearances of Li'l Abner’s creator, cartoonist Al Capp, with “Kickapoo” punch served beforehand.25

The work of running social events was not obstacle-free. Greeks often felt constrained by strict rules related to times, dates, and places of rushing and pledging; the topic kept the Inter-Fraternity Council fussing for years. Detailed regulations, impossible to enforce with regularity, were often bent and sometimes broken.26 If it wasn’t hard enough to manage rushing and pledging, party hosts and hostesses felt further burdened by the fact the campus was supposed to be dry: no alcohol anywhere, under any circumstances. On Homecoming weekend 1951, representatives of the Inter-Fraternity Council finagled a meeting with the board of trustees to see if students could get the rule changed. (“A more appropriate time could not have been chosen,” the Echo observed. “While the meeting is in progress, students and alumni will be well on their way to getting fried.”)

Students asked alumni to join their cause. The response was not helpful. Raymond Haskill ’14 wrote: “A College is not a country club. Extended use or the misuse of liquor in a college, I have observed, affects the processes of education in just about the way that it affects the driving of a motor vehicle.” Trustees refused to budge and the Echo took license in conveying their explanation: “The College cannot accept responsibility for 1,100 students under more liberal liquor laws. We must consider the protection of women. Parents would remove their children. Donations would dry up.” And so the campus remained dry, de jure. De facto it was at least damp. Alcohol, mostly beer, was customarily well hidden, but its effects often bubbled into public view. Trustees relaxed their stand on alcohol in 1959, but not without consternation. A yearlong study had led to a proposal that undergraduates at or over the legal drinking age of twenty-one be allowed to consume liquor in fraternity houses and men’s dormitories. Its use elsewhere on campus would continue to be forbidden.

25. In a 1954 Colby lecture, Capp took a swipe at the ongoing Army-McCarthy hearings: “nothing I have ever done in Abner is as wild as this!”

26. Lambda Chi, still without a house in 1953, got caught having an off-campus party that not only bruised the rushing code but also, according to local police, “violated state liquor statutes and disturbed the peace.” Phi Delt got nabbed for allowing dancing on Sunday, another violation of state law.
The debate leading up to the change brought a firestorm. Benjamin Bubar, superintendent of the Maine Christian Civil League, alleged “bootlegging and heavy drinking on the campus at Colby College in Waterville.” Bubar quoted Toynbee in the Civic League Record and reminded readers “of the 19 civilizations that have gone down, 16 have followed the liquor road to their doom.” He urged “righteous thinking people” of Maine to send their objections to Bixler. The archconservative publisher of the Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader, William Loeb, did indeed write Bixler: “I may be a bit old-fashioned but I would never send my son or daughter to any college which approves of drinking in dormitories,” Loeb said. “This lowering of the moral standards does no institution any good. Many of us here in New Hampshire previously regarded Colby with some esteem, but we could hardly approve of such a regulation as permitting drinking in dormitories.”

Bixler wrote to calm parents and alumni in advance of the change. He confessed the total ban on alcohol was not working, and “a large majority of the students are in the habit of breaking the rule.” He blamed the social mores of the day. “Many students come from homes in which moderate drinking is not regarded as reprehensible,” he said, reporting a “general shift in attitudes among the modern college generation.” The status quo, he said, was “intolerable.”

The College had indeed found itself increasingly pinched by its own rules. In addition to insisting every fraternity hire a resident housemother, hosts were required to find at least one faculty chaperone for every event. Housemothers knew how to behave during parties. They retreated to their small apartments, closed the door, knitted, and watched flickering black-and-white TVs. Violations or not, a housemother (“Ma”) was not a snitch. She might enforce rules; but when it came to reporting names of miscreants to the dean’s office, she was deaf, dumb, and blind. Chaperones were only a bit more observant. Cast in the awkward role of having been chosen for their friendliness, they were at the same time expected to police the no-alcohol rule. By the middle of the decade they were complaining that they were unappreciated and ignored, with bacchanalia all around. The short list of willing chaperones got shorter. Fraternities struck on the idea of assigning brothers as chaperones for the chaperones, a change that was imperceptible except that chaperones began getting thank-you notes and the housemother apartments got more crowded.

The rule change was approved at the board meeting in October 1959. Student leaders made a plea for no celebration lest trustees quickly rue their decision. A month later the indefatigable Bubar grabbed headlines again, claiming drunkardness had reached a peak in Maine, citing specifically “excessive drinking and brawling” at Bowdoin and Colby. (At Bates, he said, things were...
under control.) Dean of Men Nickerson refuted half the charge. “I don’t think Mr. Bubar has the facts,” he said, “I’ve never seen any brawling or evidence of it here.” As to the matter of excessive drinking, Nickerson turned to B&G superintendent George Whalon. The College was without a security department. The men who worked nights tending the boilers for Whalon were in charge of keeping the peace. Whalon, who had led the new construction at Fort Devens during World War II, doubtless knew excessive drinking when he saw it. He said he hadn’t seen any such thing at Colby.

**LOVEJOY REMEMBERED**

Elijah Lovejoy’s sacrifice was all but forgotten. Some scholars and actors on the public stage remembered him, but there were no memorials. The black people of Alton tended his secret grave from the beginning, but they had no way to share their celebration of his life. His alma mater included him on its list of famous graduates but did not otherwise mark his martyrdom. The Lovejoy home in Albion fell to rubble; the family graveyard grew over with weeds. It took a long time to make it right.

In 1890 a man named Bust Loomis, who had stood with Lovejoy at Gilman’s warehouse, rescued wood from the dilapidated Lovejoy homestead on Cherry Street in Alton, Illinois, and used it to fashion a bookcase. When Loomis died the piece went to his niece, Mrs. George K. Hopkins. A Baptist minister, the Reverend Melvin Jamison, told Hopkins of the Colby connection, and in 1897 she gave it to the College. That same year a great Lovejoy monument was erected in the hills above Alton. Thomas Dimmock, who often reminded his Missouri Republican readers of Lovejoy, led the effort. The state legislature gave funds. The 100-foot marker with a Winged Victory bronze at its top was dedicated November 8, 1897. William Scotch Johnston, who as a young man had helped to bury Lovejoy, led dignitaries to his forgotten grave.

Two years later the Colby Class of 1899 presented a tablet honoring Lovejoy as a “patriot and a martyr” (and, curiously, as a “philanthropist”). It was placed in the old chapel and later moved to the chapel on the Hill. In 1919, Norman L. Bassett ‘91 had a medal struck to honor those Colby graduates who had fallen in the recent war. On its face was an image of Lovejoy. Bassett took the occasion to scold. “Until this year,” he said, “neither the College nor alumni have rendered the tribute we owe him (Lovejoy). The . . . inspiration of Lovejoy should have been woven into the fiber of every boy and girl who came here . . . yet they have come and gone without a [sic] knowledge of that life.”
In 1929, some ninety-two years beyond Lovejoy's murder, the Illinois Press Association established a Hall of Fame. The first bust placed in the new Memorial Hall was that of Lovejoy. Colby's town-and-gown leader Herbert Carlyle Libby attended the dedication ceremonies. In 1935 the hearthstone from the crumbled Lovejoy homestead in Albion was marked with a plaque and placed near South College. Colby observed the centennial of Lovejoy's death on November 8, 1937. Former President Herbert Hoover spoke in the overfilled old Baptist Church, the site of Lovejoy's 1826 commencement.27 His address was broadcast on nationwide radio.

In 1947 President Bixler traveled to Saint Louis and to Alton to spin yet another thread in the Maine-Missouri connection. He spoke at a banquet at the Forest Park Hotel in Saint Louis and announced plans for a new Colby "Lovejoy Memorial Building," still a dozen years away. The following year the town of Albion erected its Lovejoy monument, this one on the previously unmarked site of his birthplace. The town gave the deeds for the birthplace property and the Lovejoy family cemetery to the College in 1957.

Many seized upon the Lovejoy story in their own struggles to broaden and preserve sacred freedoms. Illinois Senator Paul Simon wrote a biography, Lovejoy: Martyr to Freedom, in 1964 and was the keynote speaker at Colby's 150th Lovejoy anniversary in 1987. Illinois governor and two-time presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson held Lovejoy as a personal hero and often presided at occasions honoring him. The fallen editor is cited in the writings of an unending line of Constitutional journalists known for often unpopular stands on contemporary social issues: Irving Dilliard, James Russell Wiggins, Thomas Winship, Ralph McGill, Anthony Lewis, and so forth. And in Albion, Philip and Janet Dow work tirelessly to honor Lovejoy in the town of his birth.

Of all the torches that burn for Elijah Lovejoy, the brightest is in the hands of another rebel preacher, the Reverend Robert Tabscott of Saint Louis. A Lovejoy zealot and intrepid in support of Constitutional rights, the Missouri-born Tabscott is a daunting figure in the continuing Lovejoy story. Their lives are hauntingly similar, soul brothers across the ages, each one a preacher at the Des Peres Presbyterian Church in Saint Louis, each one talented with words and willing to face the issues of the day, and each one persecuted and reviled for daring to deal with them. At six-foot-six with signature reading glasses melded to his forehead, Tabscott is a colorful and compelling preacher. Inspired by liberal causes, he has lost both friends and pulpits along the way. He

27. President Johnson delighted the crowd when he introduced Hoover as "our extinguished President."
was in the thick of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, and his own mother chastised him for working with black people. Having written tirelessly on the subject, he is today the leading Lovejoy scholar. He wrote and produced the powerful documentary film *Lovejoy, The Vigil*, in 1987, with poet Maya Angelou (also of Saint Louis) as its narrator. When it is shown to schoolchildren, he often appears as Lovejoy, dressed in period costume. He relishes doing research and often walks among the graves of Alton, looking for still more connections.

Colby’s first living memorial to Lovejoy was established in 1952 with the initial presentation of the Lovejoy Award, given annually to an editor, reporter, or publisher who has continued the Lovejoy heritage of fearlessness and freedom. The award, presented at a public convocation each November, was Dwight Sargent’s idea. Sargent ’39 had barely begun a newspaper career when he spoke at a 1944 commemoration of Freedom of the Press Week at Colby. In 1950–51, at the age of thirty-nine, he became Maine’s first-ever Nieman Fellow.28 While at Harvard he struck on the notion that his alma mater should honor both Lovejoy and the nation’s best journalists. He called President Bixler and soon found himself in the living room of the President’s House making the case for a Lovejoy Award before Bixler, Galen Eustis, and Richard Dyer. They agreed.

The succession of Lovejoy Award winners has become a roster of the most courageous of America’s journalists. Through the 1950s many recipients brought echoes of Lovejoy himself, drawn heavily from editors who stood for peaceful racial integration in the face of hateful protests. They included James Pope, executive editor of the *Louisville Times*, the first winner in 1952; Irving Dilliard of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (1953); James Russell Wiggins of the *Washington Post* (1954); Buford Boone of the *Tuscaloosa News* (1957), and John Heiskell of the *Arkansas Gazette*, who made national headlines at the 1958 convocation when he lashed out at Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus for creating “a dangerous and menacing crisis” by sending the National Guard to Little Rock’s Central High School.

28. A self-professed “Independent Republican,” Sargent became editorial page director of the Guy Gannett–owned *Press Herald, Evening Express*, and *Sunday Telegram* in 1955 and four years later was named editor of the editorial page of the *New York Herald Tribune*. At the age of forty-seven he returned to Harvard’s Neiman Foundation as its curator. Colby awarded him an honorary degree in 1956, and in 1958 he joined the College’s Board of Trustees. He died in 2001 having rarely missed the annual Lovejoy Convocation that he founded.
In 1974 Tabscott founded the Elijah P. Lovejoy Society of Saint Louis, which each year honors people of all walks of life “whose commitment to freedom and justice has made a difference.” Two of the first three recipients were the editor Dilliard and Colby President Robert E. L. Strider. (In 1978 the Striders visited Alton where he spoke at a symposium on the 175th anniversary of Lovejoy's birth.) The third recipient was Jesse Lundon Cannon, trustee of the Lovejoy grave. The black people of Alton first assigned a trustee to care for the grave in 1885. Cannon, an Alton mailman, was only the fourth in that long line. Before him were Isaac Kelley, Henry Hunter, and Harry Coates. When Cannon died, his wife, Charlene Louise Cannon, a retired elementary school music teacher, took his place. The Cannons were honored with the presentation of a special citation at the Lovejoy Convocation in 1983. Jesse spoke for the couple and acknowledged that the Lovejoy tradition had, at last, “come full circle.”

SPORTS—OVER THE TOP

Expanded facilities and an infusion of aggressive young coaches ushered in a decade of rousing success for the traditional teams. The year 1959, when every team except track won or shared a Maine State Series crown, was called Colby’s “greatest year in sports.” Everyone thought it was grand. Bixler did too, but he worried that athletic programs had begun to overshadow the classrooms.

Intercollegiate sports were for men only. Women’s teams—field hockey, tennis, basketball, volleyball, and archery—were part of a physical education program begun in 1898. Janet Marchant, director since 1940, wanted women’s athletics to avoid the “evils” of the men’s programs, and the women were safely separated in Runnals Union, with two playfields close by and a third, built in 1955 across the street from the women’s dorms. Marjorie Duffy Bither, a physical education instructor from 1937 to 1941, returned in 1952 and championed efforts to balance the scales. In the meantime the only way the “girls” could make sports headlines was to join the Powder Puff Football League, for which brothers of DU fraternity served as coaches of six sorority teams that competed mainly to draw a crowd and, at 25¢ a ticket, raise money for the Infantile Paralysis Foundation (March of Dimes). 29

29. In 1953, nearly one thousand people watched Jane Whipple (Coddington) ’55, later a trustee, and Marlene Hurd (Jabar) ’54 lead the Sigma Kappas to a 13–6 win over Chi Omega on a modified Seaverns Field.
Although a croquet match at Bowdoin in 1860 is said to be the College's first intercollegiate competition, the oldest traditional sport, baseball, began in 1867. At the turn of the century, a pitcher from Iowa was drawing the attention of a baseball-crazy world. In 1905 Connie Mack came to watch John Wesley Coombs '06 pitch on the diamond near the railroad tracks and signed him on the spot with the Philadelphia Athletics. They called him "Colby Jack," and in his first season he pitched the longest game on record, a 24-inning, 4–1 victory over the Boston Red Sox. He won thirty-one games in 1910 (including a still-standing AL record of thirteen shutouts) and three World Series games in five days against the Chicago Cubs. In 1914 he was traded to the Brooklyn Robins (Dodgers) and two years later hurled the only Brooklyn win in a five-game World Series against Babe Ruth and the Sox. The new diamond on the Hill was named for Coombs and dedicated at Commencement 1951. Colby Jack was on hand for the ceremonies.

After retiring as a player, Coombs was a college coach, first at Williams, then Princeton, and finally at Duke University (1929–52) where among his players was a young John Winkin. In 1954, thirty-year veteran Colby coach Eddie Roundy suffered a heart attack at the outset of the season and died that summer. Winkin, age thirty-four, took his place. A former Navy lieutenant commander, "Wink" was soon recognized as one of the great students of the game; by the end of the decade the little man with a giant appetite for baseball had coached Colby teams to four straight Maine championships. In 1958 the team posted a 15–5 season before losing to Holy Cross in Colby's first-ever NCAA championships. The following year the team again qualified for the NCAA postseason playoffs, but Bixler said no. The games would conflict with final exams. Students were furious. Winkin gritted his teeth, and the team stayed home.

The decade saw a return to glory in football, played at Colby since 1892. Charles "Nels" Corey replaced Walter Homer as coach at the end of the 1950 season, and Frank Maze took over in 1952. His 1954 team (albeit 1–6) was memorable for the outstanding passing combination of seniors Don Lake and John Jacobs. Jacobs, sidelined with polio in 1952, was named All Maine the next year and in 1954 led the nation's small college pass receivers with 1,100 yards. Quarterback Lake, a mere 155 pounds, completed thirty-four passes for five touchdowns in his final season.30 Robert "Bob" Clifford, thirty-nine, also a veteran Navy commander, followed Maze as head coach in 1956 and promptly

30. Two years later Lake was killed in an airplane crash while training at Lackland (Texas) Air Force Base.
produced the first outright State Series title since 1941. In 1958 the team stunned
the University of Maine when Mark Brown ’59 passed to Bob Burke ’61 for a
77-yard touchdown and a 16–12 comeback win in the final minutes. (There-
after, Colby lore claimed Pacy Levine of the sports-crazy Levine brothers beat
Burke into the end zone.) The 1959 team fought through three rainy Saturdays
to repeat as champs.

Interest in skiing had begun in 1946 when a group of returning veterans, all
freshmen, approached Dr. Charles Vigue ’20, owner of the Mountain Farm on
Waterville’s Upper Main Street, and asked if they could reopen the defunct
slope on his property. Horatio Russ (H. R.) Dunham ’86, operator of the
state’s largest ski equipment store on nearby Main Street, had owned the farm
and built the first slope. The hill had a 400-foot vertical drop in barely 1,400
feet, and boasted a 1,700-foot rope tow—Maine’s longest. A wooden jump left
skiers precariously close to the Messalonskee Stream on the outrun. Dunham
died during the war, and the mountain slope was closed. Ronald Brown, who
shared Dunham’s zeal for skiing, took over the store.31 Vigue, the new owner,
let students resurrect the place, and over the next three years they cleared the
brush, laid out two slopes, reclaimed the jump, improved the road, and built
a lodge with boards taken from a barn being razed to make way for Thayer
Hospital.32 The Outing Club, with Don Koons (geology) as adviser, helped,
and the first ski club was formed in 1949–50. Faculty members Paul Macher-
mer (chemistry) and Philip Osburg (biology) took turns as coaches, as did a
string of students. Captain Jake Pearson ’54 was invited to the NCAA national
championships in his senior year and paid his own way ($200) to Reno,
Nevada. The many hours of work maintaining the slope always far outnumbered
the minutes of skiing, and the club all but vanished when the veterans
graduated.

Something like ice hockey had been played since 1887 when students cleared
snow off a piece of the Kennebec and played “polo” with a team from Coburn.
There had been a real team since 1922, always at the mercy of the fickle weather.
From 1930 until the move to the Hill, Bill Millett kept the precarious sport
alive. Along the way Millett, once a college star himself, produced many re-

31. Although Dunham’s began as a ski outfitter, under Brown it later became broadly
well known as one of the country’s first retail catalogue merchants, selling Hathaway
Shirts both in the store and by mail.

32. John Harriman, a champion jumper, led the effort. Others included George Bow-
ers, George Wiswell, Geof Lyford, and Dave Dobson. As a naval cadet, Dobson was killed
in a fighter crash in 1951. A ski award was named in his memory.
marble players including Elbridge "Hocker" Ross '35, a member of the 1936 U.S. Olympic team. By 1951 Nels Corey's teams were making and clearing their own ice on a new outdoor rink with floodlights near the fieldhouse. The next year there was talk of abandoning the sport, but an anonymous donor pledged $1,500, and Bixler pitched in $500 to keep it going. Continuation was important not only to students but also to the local French Canadian community that revered hockey like no other sport. Bernard LaLiberte '52 went directly from being a player to coaching the team, and Romeo Lemieux and Wilfred Rancourt were local men who took turns coaching.

Fundraising began for a new covered rink in 1953 when Millett teamed with former players Gordon Jones '40 and Joseph Wallace '43, to raise $85,000. Ronald Brown championed a Waterville effort that added $14,000, and the College put in more than $100,000. Construction began in 1954 for a facility first designed with a roof only. Before the work began there was enough money in hand to enclose it. The arena was dedicated in January 1955 and named in honor of a major benefactor, Harold Alfond, who had already given five athletic fields in the area. Alfond was among the dedication ceremony speakers. He said it was the most thrilling moment of his life. "In all humility," he said, "I ask that I be granted the resources, the ability, and the life blood to enable me to continue to assist young men and women in attending Colby." Time and a generous heart would show his wishes granted.

The rink was the first and only indoor facility in the area, and Alfond wanted to be sure local youngsters could use it. There began the long tradition of giving the local Pee Wee hockey program free use on Saturday mornings and providing time for Albert "Ab" Larson's Waterville Skating Club on Sundays. That fall Jack Kelley arrived to coach. Kelley, twenty-eight, a Coast Guard veteran, had starred at Boston University and was a member of the Olympic team of the American Hockey Association. His broad assignment at Colby reflected the thin coaching ranks and the current status of hockey. He coached varsity and freshman hockey and supervised the intramural and recreational ice program.

Except for the devout locals, hockey was still something of a mystery on the campus. The Echo ran a primer for the uninitiated who had not braved the outdoor cold to watch, explaining helpfully: "The idea of the game is to place the puck into the opponent's net more than they do in yours."
Basketball had been king of winter sports since 1936. Eddie Roundy coached from 1938 to the early years on the Hill, and in 1946 Lee Williams arrived to put a winning stamp on the sport for the next two decades. Colorful, aggressive, and often bombastic, Williams built winning teams and gained legions of fans. Like his coaching compatriots, he was a master of his game. His 1950–51 team (20–8) won the State Series. Ted Shiro ’51 and John Jabar ’52, leaders on the “Cinderella” Waterville High teams in the mid-1940s, filled the guard positions. Shiro became the all-time individual scoring leader with 1,212 points, a mark that held until 1964. Jabar captained the 1951–52 team to a 24–4 season, at the time the best ever by a Maine college.33 By the end of the 1950s, Colby had won eight straight State Series titles, sharing the ninth with the University of Maine in 1959.

Soccer was the passion of a single man, athletics department chair Gilbert “Mike” Loebs. He arranged Maine’s first intercollegiate game with Bates in 1955; four years later men’s soccer became a varsity sport. He coached the teams, formal and informal, for eight years and amassed a striking 49–4–2 record. A soccer field was built across the road from Johnson Pond in 1962, and in 1966, the year of Loeb’s retirement, the field was dedicated in his name.34

Active but out of the headlines were other teams including golf. Clifford, doubling as golf coach, saw his club team win Colby’s first state title in 1957. In the dirt-floor fieldhouse, coach Andy Tryens, followed by John Coons, soldiered with sparse numbers of indoor track loyalists carrying on a tradition begun in 1895.

The overall athletic program had broad appeal. The Sentinel, the Echo, and WTVL local radio touted upcoming games in excruciating detail. Area supporters were more than spectators. Millett, Loebs, and Roundy began a Colby Junior Club for local youngsters—mostly with Colby ties—and ran Saturday clinics in the fieldhouse, borrowing coaches and players from whatever sport was in season. In the summer Millett operated a popular school for area high school coaches. Frank Lahey came from Notre Dame in 1950; Bob Cousy from the Celtics in 1956. The College built a Little League field on its own land near

33. Then and into the future, the Waterville Jabar family provided more talent for Colby basketball teams than any other: brothers John, Norman, Herbie and Paul, all ’52; Tony ’54, Joe ’68, and Joe’s son Jason ’96.

34. Loebs, an indefatigable administrator, brought men’s basketball (1936), tennis, and golf (1965) to varsity status, and at the same time nurtured an extensive intramural program. He spent thirty-six years in service of the College, thirty-three as athletic department chair and three at the end of his tenure as registrar.
the Messalonskee Stream in 1957, a boon to a thriving eight-team city league. Colby students were among the coaches. Meanwhile, sleep-deprived parents of Pee Wee hockey players faithfully supported the devoted Ray Lemieux who ran a program that began in the early hours of Saturday mornings, long before the winter sun was up.

Department chair Loebs had his capable hands full. The cadre of driven coaches demanded as much and often more than he could give; by mid-decade questions began to arise over the role of athletics in the full spectrum of things. The success of major sports teams developed an ever-larger army of supporters who reasoned there was no better way to broaden Colby’s reputation than to dominate in sports. It was, they said, good for students, good for admissions, and good for alumn:ni who gave the money. On the campus, particularly among the faculty, there were those who felt athletics was taking too much of the stage.

Bixler saw it coming. He loved sports—especially baseball—and was an avid fan.35 Twenty-seven Colby teams won state championships during his presidency, yet he worried about the growing emphasis. In 1952 he wrote one of the most forceful public messages of his long tenure, published on the President’s Page of the Alumnus:

the will to win, important as it is, can demand too high a price for its satisfaction... when a college is willing to enroll athletes simply so that they can represent it in public contests it has lost all sense of what amateurism means, to say nothing of its awareness of what an educational institution requires for its own integrity... if the college itself allows a major share of its scholarship funds to go to students whose chief claim is that they can play games, then it seems to me that the line which divides the amateur from the professional has been crossed... It is safe to say that the relations among the Maine colleges are as friendly and the athletic practices are on as high a level as anywhere in the world of intercollegiate competition. To keep them so the four colleges have now agreed to tell each other the amount of scholarship or other aid received by each boy who plays on an athletic team along with his grades in class. In a day when athletics are under such close scrutiny this is, I believe, an important step and one which our alumni will approve of and support.

35. During his brief Army service in World War I he once got himself back across a U.S.-held border without a passport by being able to recite the current major league baseball standings for the guards.
Some alumni approved and some didn’t. Worry over “balance and emphasis” came into sharper focus in 1956 when the baseball team was made to pass up postseason play. The year before, a dilemma over drawing lines in athletics came up at sister Bates, where officials relented to a plea from the athletic department—principally concerned with football—to allow freshmen on varsity teams. Bixler refused to go along, claiming “a boy’s freshman year should be free of the pressures which varsity encounters might bring.” Bowdoin and UMO stood fast as well. Orono had no need to bolster its teams. There were already rumblings the university was getting too big for the State Series. Competition in football ended first, but other races held together eighteen more years until Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin decided to go their own ways entirely.

The flap over postseason baseball play and the Ford Foundation–supported study of the Colby “climate of learning” prompted a closer look at athletics in general. The faculty, in the name of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors), began to raise questions about decisions and policies in both admissions and the awarding of financial aid. The dean of men and dean of women had made all admissions decisions until 1945 when a separate admissions office was established. Two years later, when Marriner became the first dean of faculty, the job went back to the student deans who promptly got themselves an assistant to handle the task; Bill Bryan ’48 became the College’s first director of admissions in 1951. Earle A. McKeen ’29 left an administrative post with the Maine Department of Education in 1956 to assist Bryan and double as the first director of placement.36 Compassionate and fiercely loyal, Bryan had an unerring eye for promising students. Many under his watch would later say that without his willingness to take a chance they might never have had a college education. An avid fan in almost every sport, he readily admitted his athletic bent, and became a good friend to the insatiable young coaches.

Bixler began to apply the brakes. The Ford study paid special attention to athletics. It revealed, among other things, an astonishing discrepancy between the academic performance of men and women. In the spring of 1955 the Committee on Academic Standing dismissed twenty-seven students. Twenty-two of them were men. The superior performance of women was nothing new—

36. McKeen was well known locally, having served as assistant principal at Waterville Junior High School and as a popular superintendent of the nearby Winslow schools. He wore so many Colby hats that when an outside firm was hired to do an administrative staff survey in the 1960s, it was impossible to place him on an organization chart as he had no clear reporting line. It hadn’t mattered; he did all of his jobs well and without much oversight.
women led the men in academic performance from the beginning—but the gap was widening. Women were outdistancing men by a margin of four-to-one in Phi Beta Kappa membership even while the men outnumbered them in total enrollment.

Athletics were not entirely to blame. The era produced a great number of outstanding male student athletes, but at the same time a disproportionate number of those who were electrifying the sports arenas were not lighting up the classrooms. It could not have been surprising. The wars had depleted the number of college-going men and scrutiny of admissions practices showed that, by standard measures of preparedness and achievement, the averages for admitted men were well below those of women.

The admissions process was not alone under the microscope. Soon after the Ford study’s examination of admissions came the revelation that well-intentioned sports boosters, allied under the name of Mayflower Hill Associates, were hell-bent in support of athletes. The associates found “adoptive parents” in town where athletes were given room and board to avoid campus costs, and the boosters were working mightily to influence decisions on scholarship awards. Some new scholarships, in conflict with general policies, were de facto for athletes only. The faculty backed Bixler in pressing for reform, and the scales slowly began to adjust. Even so, in varying degrees of intensity, questions of athletic versus academic priorities, emphasis, and balance would come up again and again, endlessly into the future.

BUILDING AND BENDING

Construction went on at a furious pace, with more buildings and lots of moving of the earth. Visitors, accustomed to seeing only bruised ground and unfinished shells, marveled at the appearance of the place. Just as shrubbery and saplings were planted and the grass began to grow, the Maine State Highway Commission announced plans to commandeer two hundred acres and run the new highway straight through the campus. When the fight was over, 1-95 had an odd, swooping bend, and the College kept on building.

It wasn’t that there weren’t any trees; they were simply in the wrong places.37 Following a plan provided by John Olmsted of New York, the College began

37. The City of Waterville had the opposite problem: trees were too many and too big. The city health officer, Arthur Daviau, found it his duty to warn in the annual city report of 1950 that the potential threat of “damage, injury and even life present in some of the large trees that line some of our streets.”

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to grade lawns, install granite steps, create paths, and plant trees—lots of trees. In the fall of 1949 ten 35-foot to 40-foot elm trees were dug up, bagged, and frozen, and in the dead of winter transplanted to line the walkways to the chapel. The following year, fourteen sugar maples, weighing seven tons each, were set along the mall in front of the library. More than one thousand trees were planted, most under the supervision of the ubiquitous Frank Johnson, who horrified workmen by insisting the quarter top of each precious sapling get lopped off to assure vigorous growth.

Summer landscaping included the elimination of an old road separating the library from fraternity row; then there were the lawns and terraces, graded by hand. Many plantings were gifts. A woman in Cape Elizabeth sent one thousand tulip bulbs. A man from Augusta gave Colorado blue spruces and Norway red pines.38

One of the mowers and rakers was young George Mitchell who worked on the grounds crew the summer of 1954 following his graduation from Bowdoin. His father, also George, was a Colby plant foreman. Years later, George the senator often came to speak, including at two commencements (1983 and 1999). While he never told the story in Brunswick, at Colby he rarely failed to tell of his father’s great pride in working for Colby, and of the time his father pointed him out to a visitor as he was working on the lawns. “You see that young man over there?” the elder Mitchell asked. “That’s my son. Living proof that it takes a Bowdoin degree to work on the lawns at Colby.”

If architect Larson had underestimated anything, it was the postwar explosion of automobiles. As parents bought Oldsmobiles and Buicks, students drove cast-off Fords and Chevys. Parking lots, ugly and expensive to begin with, needed expansion. When all students were safely ensconced on the Hill, trustees declared no freshman could bring a car to the campus. Dean Nickerson proffered a slim excuse: “The reason,” he said, “is the College feels it has a responsibility to the students’ parents to see that the freshmen get regular and balanced meals and that they are ensured adequate time for their studies.”

38. The pines were planted in sensible places, but the spruces were set into a “nursery” east of the tennis courts to await the day when more plantings were needed. They were never moved and form an unusual grove near the Lunder House.
Ground was broken for Foss and Woodman dormitories in the fall of 1951. When they were finished the cost of the two, dedicated in June 1952, was almost $1 million. The identical Mary Low and Louise Coburn dorms, finished ten years earlier, had cost $430,000. The Foss name came from the old campus. The first Foss Hall, built in 1904 across the tracks and College Avenue, marked the beginning of a plan to build a separate college for women.39 President Charles Lincoln White, charged with finding the money, went to Eliza Foss Dexter whose only Colby tie was through a friendship with William Snyder ’85, a White supporter. Foss Hall, claimed to be the first building for the exclusive education of women north of the Massachusetts line, opened in 1904. By 1951 the Foss name was the logical choice for the new building. Dean of Women Barbara Sherman took part in the cornerstone ceremony; a year later, dean emeritus Ninetta Runnals spoke at the dedication. She refuted the Britannica definition of a dormitory (an institutional building furnishing sleeping quarters for pupils) and said “most pupils nowadays do not want sleep and others cannot get it.”

The Woodman name was not new either. Eleanora Bailey Woodman was a Maine woman and, like Foss, did not attend college. In 1922 she gave the outdoor athletic stadium on the downtown campus, dedicated “to the undying honor” of Colby sons who served “in the cause of country and universal liberty” in World War I. Woodman, with Ninetta Runnals and Louise Coburn, were key in the struggle to achieve campus equality for women. Woodman paid the salary of the first alumni secretary, and became one of the most generous benefactors in Roberts’s long tenure. When she died her will designated $200,000 to endow scholarships for women or men. In 1921 Woodman had underwritten a health and physical education program for women, and funded a women’s infirmary, staffed with a full-time nurse. (There were no health services for men until 1930 when the College purchased the Bangs estate on College Avenue and made it an infirmary. It soon became coed, with Dr. John Piper in charge.)

As the Hill campus developed, space in the east end of the new Roberts Union was set aside for a men’s infirmary, paid for by Bessie Fuller Perry in memory of her physician husband, Sherman Perry ’01. The plan was to desig-

39. President White was not in favor of the coordinate arrangement. Neither were trustees or alumni. They were alarmed at the increasing numbers of women and the decreasing number of men. In 1900 the board voted to limit enrollment of women to those who lived at home in town or could fit in the meager dormitory space available for women. A committee looking into “future policy” centered its study on the battle of the sexes and, by a vote of two to one, concluded it would be best to continue the coordinate system. Colby could not afford to decrease its enrollment.
nate the small annex of Mary Low for the women, but the space proved too small and, on separate floors, the Roberts facility was made ready for both men and women. The Roberts building was already crowded with multiple uses when Thayer Hospital opened a half-mile away in November 1951. Hospital officials, led by F. T. Hill, agreed part of one wing could be designated for Colby students. It worked less than a year. A measles epidemic swept the campus in the spring of 1952, and the Roberts infirmary was reopened. Mike Loebs was put in charge and Theodore Hardy '28 led a cadre of local physicians providing coverage included Piper, John Reynolds '36, and Clarence Dore '39. Eventually Dore took the lead, and with Susan McGraw Fortuine '26 as head nurse, ran what amounted to a small hospital.

With Foss and Woodman up and running, the new campus began to show its size and symmetry. The first four-year Hill class graduated in 1956 when Robert Frost gave the commencement address and read from Birches and Mending Wall. That summer new rock star Elvis Presley put Don't Be Cruel at the top of the hit parade. Except for shrill winds tugging at the canvas over the commencement platform, Frost's readings must surely have affirmed the bucolic splendor of Mayflower Hill—and Presley's tune could have been a theme song for Colby's fight to keep the new campus in one piece. In August the state highway commissioner David Stevens announced the new interstate highway would run between Mount Meriici Academy (which that year opened a new high school) and the College, scarcely a few hundred yards in front of the President's House. It would require taking two hundred campus acres, thirty-one for the highway itself.

Frank Johnson had died only months before. Incredibly, the same encroachments that prompted him to lead the College out of town were threatening again. Never mind the sights and sounds of an express highway: future campus development to the west would become impossible, and expansion of Waterville would be hobbled as well. Earlier, Colby had joined the city in asking to bring the highway close to town, but this was too close.

Much of Eisenhower's greatest public works project was already built, and the highway was creeping along on a final path close to old Route 1, north from

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40. No one ever looked less like a physician than the squatly, colorful, cigar-smoking Clarence Dore, who often wore hunting clothes to work. Seeing him for the first time students and parents were sometimes appalled—until they had occasion to experience firsthand his wizardry as a diagnostician and caregiver. He quickly became an institution within an institution, seeing Colby patients in the early morning and whenever else he was needed, and at the same time managing his own full general practice.
Miami into Maine. The line of the new system was governed by major cities and, except to avoid impossible natural barriers, was laid out by dead reckoning. If there were disputes, matters were settled by eminent domain. By the time the highway reached Maine, planners were in no mood for changes.

Board chairman Leonard called an emergency trustee meeting. Bixler and Eustis formed a war cabinet and hunkered down for a fight. Bixler wrote alumni and parents, prompting hundreds of angry messages to the Highway Commission offices in Augusta. The New England Colleges Fund sent a resolution saying: “To consider limiting Colby’s development once again is in itself almost unthinkable.” Mayor Clinton Clauson weighed in with a condemning city council resolution. The local chamber of commerce squawked. The Portland law firm of Hutchinson, Fierce, Atwood, and Allen took the brief, pro bono. Leonard Pierce, a Bowdoin trustee and graduate, stipulated on behalf of the firm that they accepted the job “only as a civic duty and without compensation.” One of the firm’s best lawyers, Sigrid Tompkins ’38 was on the case.

Well-known Maine author Kenneth Roberts was furious about the plan, and the power of his pen made him a force to be reckoned with. When British historian Arnold Toynbee characterized Maine as “a backward state, rich in nothing but woodsmen, watermen, hunters and not much besides,” Roberts wrote a scathing reply. Now, he said, the Highway Commission would commit “a contemptible sin” if it ran a highway through the Colby campus. If it did, he said, he would be forced to make a public apology to Toynbee.

By October the commission was holding closed meetings to see if there might be a way around the College after all. Engineers posed three alternate routes and unveiled them at a public hearing at the Averill School in town. One of their new plans (2-A) took the road farther west, in back of the campus. It required no land from Mount Merici or Thayer Hospital, but it would relocate the Second Rangeway and take a chunk of twenty-seven acres out of Colby’s backyard. Fair enough.

Local agreement wasn’t enough. The U.S. Bureau of Public Roads had the last word. State and other federal authorities signed on, but the bureau said no. Commissioner C. D. Curtiss wrote Eustis to say plan 2-A “would introduce considerable adverse travel distance in this important highway with resulting increased cost to vehicle operators.” Eustis shot back. The plan would add a
mere 44 hundredths of a mile to the highway, and add only $230,000 to the $14 million project. Colby, Eustis said, would cover the extra expense by reducing its claims for acquisition and damages. Maine authorities asked engineers to wiggle the 2-A plan to see what could be done to appease the bureau. At the same time, Bixler and Eustis wrote more letters, this time to bigwigs. Appeals for help in leaning on the bureau went to Governor Muskie, U.S. Senators Frederick Payne and Margaret Chase Smith, judges, newspaper editors, college presidents, and others. The highest reach was to Sherman Adams, chief of staff at the White House. Adams was sympathetic. Whether or not he was the one who got the job done, the bureau relented.

By late October, after fourteen months of combat, the highway war was over. In November 1957 trustees voted to accept $12,000 for twenty-seven acres of land at the rear of the campus. Eustis made it plain the amount in no way reflected the true value, and trustees seized the moment to approve the purchase of other available property between the new highway and the campus and took the further step to authorize the executive committee, forever more, to “make any and all such purchases as it deems to be for the best interest of the College.”

With the highway battle over, in April 1958, twenty-nine simultaneous dinners were held throughout the Northeast to launch the College’s $2.5 million Fulfillment capital fund campaign. More than half was already in hand. Leonard Mayo ‘22 was the national chairman. Dinner sites ranged from the Pilot’s Grill in Bangor to the University Club in New York and from the Officers Club at the Presque Isle Air Force Base to the Crown Hotel in Providence. A volunteer faculty member was the featured speaker at each event. Each audience heard a recorded message from Bixler, “in stereophonic sound.”

The advent of “stereo” wasn’t the only remarkable advance of the age. There were others, including Sputnik, the first artificial space satellite, launched by the Russians October 4, 1957. It circled the globe every ninety minutes, beeping a signal as it went. The local Sentinel ran a pic-

41. State Highway Department officials were grumpy about having to put a wrinkle in the new highway. Many had long tenure and longer memories. Despite repeated requests made long after there were signs for the college exits in Lewiston and Brunswick, Colby could not get markers until 1983 when George Campbell, a kindly new Commissioner, took pity and gave the order. Thomas College, suffering from the sins of its sister, had to wait as well.
ture of it on the front page—upside down. Americans sulked at being upstaged. Many blamed the nation’s educational system for falling behind. Donaldson Koons (geology) said there could be no quick fix and noted that science training had diminished while the impact of science increased. He urged a return to the curriculum of a century before “when every graduate was expected to take mathematics through calculus, mechanics, optics, astronomy, chemistry, physiology, zoology, mineralogy, and geology.”

On the line was money needed for three unnamed buildings: one for classrooms, one for administrative offices, and a third for art and music. In the meantime, there was tidying up to do. The goal was exceeded in two years. The classroom building, named Lovejoy, opened in February 1959; the administrative building was opened a year later and named for Eustis. By then there were thirty-four buildings on Mayflower Hill. Many thought that when the art and music building was finished, the campus would be complete.

Bixler had finished much of what he set out to do, and began to consider retirement. Three years earlier, well before anyone (including the dean himself) knew Marriner was retiring as dean of faculty, Bixler and board chairman Leonard began looking for his replacement. Marriner had signaled the day was coming when he would settle into semiretirement and write a history of the College in time for the 150th anniversary in 1963. Bixler and Leonard needed to be ready for the change, and in the spring of 1957 found the man they wanted. In March they announced that in the fall the new dean would be a thirty-nine-year-old professor of English at Connecticut College, Robert E. L. Strider. Leonard later made no bones about it. He and Bixler had been looking for the next president.

At commencement 1959, Bixler announced the Fulfillment campaign was over the top. His further notice that he would retire after one more year overshadowed the fundraising news. He explained he was then sixty-five years old and “an office of this sort needs a person with the energy and vitality only youth

42. Some of the incongruous and unsightly veterans’ apartments were bulldozed in the summer of 1958, and the Alumnus reported, “Across the vista that has opened up, Colby now has a ringside view of construction on the new expressway.” The following year, the first lampposts were installed from the women’s dorms to the library. With all of the utility wiring placed underground, the cost of completing the project across the campus was estimated at $75,000.

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can offer.” When the art and music center was opened that fall, the newly formed Friends of Art presented the College with gifts of more than one hundred works of art at a special dinner held in Foss Hall. The Jette primitives looked down approvingly as Leonard announced the building would be named for Bixler. In matters of timing, design, and harmony, the naming choice was perfect. Bixler was deeply moved. He whimsically acknowledged he had hoped to be able to name the expensive building for Rockefeller or Carnegie, but no donor had come. (In the naming for Bixler, no one said the center was being named for Mary Bixler as well. Someone should have.) Days later Bixler posed for photographs in front of the main entrance to the center’s auditorium. In the frieze over the doorway above his head was a specially designed building insignia with music icons flanked by a pair of elegant wings, a silent tribute to the publicity-shy Wing sisters whose gifts of paintings had begun a stunning collection. In the course of time the wings would take a second meaning, emblematic of a coming museum that would sprout many wings of its own.

SELLING AND SAVING

The 1929 budget showing the feasibility of moving the College included an estimate of $1 million in profit from the sale of the old property. It would be enough, they thought, to pay as much as a third of the cost of the new place. Like almost everything else associated with the move, the guess was innocently but grossly understated. As things turned out, there was barely money to move at all, much less to spend it to save the precious artifacts of the old campus.

For a while, College officials hoped the railroad company that had crowded them off the old campus might save them by buying most of the land. Even before 1941 President Johnson suggested to Maine Central Railroad that it reroute its line and buy the property. Carleton Brown joined the argument, pointing out that by eliminating the safety hazard of the crossing on College Avenue, MCRR could save the cost of guards on the avenue and on Front Street. The railroad didn’t bite. Ten years later a large sign was placed on the deserted campus, facing College Avenue:

FOR SALE
Old Colby College Campus
38 Commercial lots, 8 Buildings
See your Broker
or
Supt. of Bldgs. — Colby College