

Class of 1916

Class History: Law Class of 1916, University of Michigan

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CLASS HISTORY.

Law Class of 1918, University of Michigan.

When, on a certain Fall day of the year 1915, the class of 1918 Laws assembled for their first lectures, there was but little to distinguish them from many preceding classes. But now in 1918 there are many distinguishing marks, not the least of which is that it is the first to be almost decimated by the Great War. It is the purpose of these remarks to trace this evolution during the last three years.

At the beginning of our Freshman year our class comprised one hundred twenty students, whose most outstanding characteristics were good-fellowship and a serious intention to fit themselves to be true and worthy lawyers. How this intention was in many cases fulfilled, and in others at least temporarily frustrated, we shall presently see. Our class commenced studying with a vim which brooked no such interruptions as class dances and elaborate social activities. One smoker sufficed to put us all on terms of friendly rivalry and comradeship. Even athletics could scarcely thrive in a class so intent upon forging its way ahead at the bar and on the bench. Those of the class who could not give free enough play to their debating propensities in the Property and Contracts Class-rooms, found additional opportunity in the Webster and Jeffersonian Debating Societies. The former society gave a very successful banquet toward the close of the year. At this time there began to be sown in our class the seed of a huge crop of peanut politics. Where the seeds

came from we could not disclose, even tho we knew. Nor could we, or would we disclose the identity of the sowers. But the peanuts grew apace together with the politics. Nearly everyone agreed that the source of their nourishment was some subterranean channel, imperceptible to the senses of the average man. Even the oratorical tongue of a Kammerer availed not to stamp out this evil. Lower class-men wrote such songs as "That's why they have squirrels in Ann Arbor". But when in 1918, we developed so consummate a master of the art of politics as W.F.Brown, all agreed the travail had not been in vain. Thus concluded our comparatively uneventful Freshman year.

At the beginning of our Junior year we plunged deep into our work again, the only thing that disturbed in any degree the even tenor of our way being the National election. Naturally we could not hear the Dean of a rival Law School speak against our favorite candidate for the Presidency without a great deal of interest and a careful weighing of reasons and opinions. Following the election, the death of our beloved professor Knowlton, and the leaving of our honored professor Bogle, due to ill-health, cast a tinge of seriousness over the whole school. And now we began more and more clearly to see the war-clouds rising upon the national horizon. Trouble had long been brewing, we knew. We heard the cannon-thunder rumbling closer and closer. When, on April 7, 1917, the storm finally burst upon us in full fury, we as a school took every possible step to avert national disaster. Courses in military training and tactics were organized and largely attended. Hardly a man but went out daily to drill on State Street and on Ferry Field, to learn at first the

rudiments of the Manual of Arms and "squads-right" and "-left", and later the more advanced work of company and battalion maneuvers. Upon the President's call for College men in the Officers' Training Schools, many of our men left for the army, to take up work in preparation for the leadership of American soldiers "over there". Many more made attempts to enter these schools only to succeed in entering later camps. Still others left for the navy, of, in sacrificial (?) spirit heeded the call of the farm. Our law studies meanwhile continued much as usual, the only change of importance being that all students taking the regular work of military drill were exempted from taking an examination in any three-hour course which the student might choose. This faculty ruling was wise in that it provided an inducement to each student to prepare himself as early as possible for the work of a soldier and eventually for that of a leader of soldiers.

It seems only fitting that we should follow the careers of a few of our men who have distinguished themselves in their country's service:

Gaen M. Coulter has become a Captain in the Sanitary Corps. Messrs. Allee, Barrett, Conlin, Donnelly, Eager, Tannehill, Herbert, Houghton, Johnsten, and Finkbeiner have become lieutenants of Infantry. Messrs. Elliott and Newland have become Lieutenants of Artillery. Mr. Montague is an Ensign in the U.S. Naval Coast Defense. Sergeant Paley has been decorated with a Croix de Guerre for distinguished bravery in action.

Besides these there are many others who have recently entered the service and are rapidly rising to posts of

responsibility and usefulness to our government in the present crisis. We feel justly proud of such a record.

At the end of our Junior year we learned to our regret that Dean Bates was to have a year's leave of absence to teach in the Law School of Harvard University. However, the class unanimously agrees that his place has been ably filled by Professor Goddard as chairman of the Administrative Committee. In spite of the inevitable stress and strain of the Anglo-Teuton conflict, the standard of teaching in the faculty and of scholarship among the students has suffered no decline; but has risen instead. With Dean Bates return we predict further progress.

In the Fall of 1917, about 65 of us returned as Seniors. On the average four students left each month to take up their country's service, until now only a handful are left, and we too may leave soon. Nor has the Faculty been immune, Professor Grismore leaving after having been drafted, and Professor Stoner enlisting as a Captain in the Sanitary Corps. Such is the price the Law School is willing and glad to pay for Democracy!

A phenomenon of prime importance just now appearing was the intense political activity of our budding statesman and president-maker, W.F. Brown. It is perhaps not too much to say that our Senior President, Mc Crimmon owed his election in small part at least to said Brown. Later, when Judge Durfee in the Judicial Calm of Practice Court asked Brown who Professor Sunderland was, and said he didn't know him, we thought nature must have endowed Brown with some Lethian

power to beguile us into oblivion of all past events. We knew, if we didn't have a Georgia peach in our midst, we had certainly a Georgian amulet, or worse.

During the year not a few took advantage of the University R.O.T.C. course. War and preparation for war-service were uppermost in most minds all the time and consequently social activities were subordinated to more important military or government work. The time-honored Senior Law Crease dance was measurably successful but evoked less general interest than the farewell parties held from time to time for classmates departing for service.

On Swing-out day the Engineers paid us the signal honor of turning out their whole school in physical combat with our class. We were not insensible to the delicate compliment of their pique at our not marching thru the Engineering Arch. The net result of the scrap was a glorious moral victory for the Laws, and considerable talk of litigation over torn or bedgaggled caps and gowns.

In closing we must regretfully mention the leaving of two more faculty members, Prof. Rood, on leave of absence, and Professor Bunker, permanently. We wish them Godspeed in whatever line of work they take up.

Above all things else, one fact stands out prominently in the history of 1918 Laws. That is patriotic devotion to our country's welfare, whether in peace or war. Not a man but went gladly when the call came; not a man but is making good in the game of world-war; not a man but is proving himself a worthy son of Michigan. All understood the issues in the pre-

sent conflict; all went to work with a will to eradicate its causes. God grant them success in their future efforts, as He has in the past!

W. W. Sissaker.
Class Historian.

