

THE TERCENTENARY OF HARVARD COLLEGE

A CHRONICLE OF
THE TERCENTENARY YEAR
1935-1936

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1937

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TO THE ALUMNI OF
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

To all these guests you, the graduates of Harvard College, bid hearty welcome. But who shall welcome the welcomers? You need no welcome here. Familiar rooms and paths, hands of comrades and friends, joyous and tender memories and the visions of your youth have welcomed you.

*Why has this throng come up, out of the bustle and strife of the forum and the market-place, to our academic seat? What spirit stirs this multitude today? You have come to pay homage to the University of your love, and through it to all universities; because in them truth is sought, knowledge increased and stored, literature, science, and art are fostered, and honor, duty, and piety are taught. The spirit in which you come is a spirit of profound and well-grounded hopefulness. — PRESIDENT CHARLES W. ELIOT
AT THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF HARVARD COLLEGE.*

PREFACE

THE Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Founding of Harvard College has been widely recognized as an academic festival of importance in the history of education in the United States and of significance to the world at large. The factors which chiefly contributed to this recognition were undoubtedly the wide and generous participation of universities and learned societies in the observance of the anniversary and the dramatic embodiment of the world of learning, through the presence at the celebration of an extraordinary number of its most distinguished representatives; the unprecedented gathering of the Alumni, benefactors, and friends of Harvard University; the cordiality with which the hospitality of the University to its guests was seconded by that of hundreds of private hosts; and, finally, the dominant note of the whole occasion, namely, that of a community of interest in the upholding of scholarship, free and disinterested, in a world harassed by social and political upheavals — a note of confidence and courage. The ultimate impression attributable to these factors could not have been clearly foreseen or deliberately planned for. It was something to which all who were present unconsciously contributed and which gave back unforgettable memories to each of them.

If the planning and organization had their part in ordering the events and in providing a setting for them, that setting owed much to elements of beauty in music and art which, drawn from the community in which Harvard University is fortunately established, were in such harmony with the occasion as to enhance its primary significance.

This volume records the principal events and utterances of the Tercentenary Year, culminating in the ceremonies of Sep-

tember 16, 17, and 18, 1936; and it preserves as a matter of interest, and for possible future use, an account of the ways and means by which the plans were formed and carried out.

It remains for me to acknowledge with gratitude the obligation of the University and the Alumni to the preliminary committees of the Governing Boards, Faculties, and Alumni, which first defined the general character and purpose of the celebration; to the members of the staff of the Tercentenary Office for their loyal and unremitting labors of many months; to the Executive Committee and other members of the Faculties of the University who organized and conducted the Tercentenary Conference of Arts and Sciences and other learned gatherings of the summer; to the Harvard University Press, the Maintenance Department, and other administrative services of the University, whose responsibilities were largely increased by the requirements of the celebration and admirably discharged; to the Trustees, Conductor, and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; to the Trustees and the Director of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; to the hosts and hostesses who generously opened their houses to the guests of the University; to the officers of the Harvard Alumni Association and the Associated Harvard Clubs; and, finally, to the University Marshal and his Aids, the Chief Marshal, the Deputy Chief Marshal, and the aids and marshals of the Alumni Association, the Director and staff of the University Library, and the Undergraduate Tercentenary Committee. The performance of the duties assigned to all these officials on the morning and afternoon of September 18 made possible the orderly conduct of the proceedings in spite of the ravages of a West Indian hurricane.

Space does not permit specific acknowledgment here of the services of many others whose labors contributed to the Celebration in countless ways. The University's obligation to them will at least be implicit in the pages that follow.

JEROME D. GREENE

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THE TERCENTENARY OF
HARVARD COLLEGE
1636-1936

I

ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION

THE FOUNDING

THE founding of Harvard College is properly ascribed to the act of the General Court of the Company of Massachusetts Bay on October 28 (o.s.), or November 7 (n.s.), 1636, recorded in these words:

The Court agreed to give 400 *l* towards a schoale or colledge, whearof 200 *l* to bee paid the next yeare, & 200 *l* when the worke is finished, & the next Court to appoint wheare & what building.*

Neither the smallness of this grant nor the lapse of nearly two years before the first students could be enrolled and housed, and tutors appointed, impairs the validity of the founding in 1636; for it was the action of the General Court that first implemented the pious determination of the leaders of the Colony, within six years of the settlement of Massachusetts Bay, "to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity." There were formidable difficulties in getting the College started, and its existence was precarious for several years; but the continuity of the enterprise was never broken. As for the site,

.... the Colledge was, by common consent, appointed to be at *Cambridge*, (a place very pleasant and accomodate) and is called (according to the name of the first founder) *Harvard Colledge*.†

John Harvard's part in the founding of Harvard College and the contemporary reference to him as "the first founder" amply justify that designation, provided that his place in the sequence

* *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, edited by N. B. Shurtleff (Boston, 1853-54), I, 183.

† *New Englands First Fruits* (1643), p. 12.

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of events constituting the establishment of the College is clearly understood. Posterity honors as a founder the man whose bequest, coinciding with the opening of the College in 1638, was its first substantial assurance of that sustenance which the College and the University have drawn from the long line of benefactors headed by the young minister of Emmanuel and Charlestown.

The observance of anniversaries in the life of the College does not seem to have been regarded as of special interest or importance before the Bicentennial Celebration in 1836; but the record of that celebration discloses not only a general interest in the welfare of the institution, which was indeed characteristic of the New England community from the earliest years, but also the development of that sense of fellowship among the graduates which led to the organization of the Harvard Alumni Association in 1842. The impetus thus given to the growth of a sense of loyalty to Alma Mater and of responsibility for her welfare doubtless had a significant part in forming what has become in a hundred years a distinguishing characteristic of American universities and colleges.

The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary was celebrated with festivities and *solemnia* reflecting the growth of the College and its transformation into an institution of recognized university rank. The celebration covered four days, including a Law Day, an Undergraduates' Day, Foundation Day, and Alumni Day. The occasion was honored by the presence of Grover Cleveland, President of the United States. In 1886, November 7 was celebrated, as being the actual anniversary of the founding.

FIRST STEPS OF PREPARATION

The expectation was well founded that the three hundredth anniversary of the College would be fittingly observed and, again, that the character and scope of the celebration would reflect in some measure the development of the University in the preceding years. Before any steps were taken, however, on the part of either the Governing Boards or the Alumni, to organize

a Tercentenary Celebration, the Corporation recognized the importance of securing an adequate history of Harvard, one that would not only record the events and developments of the last hundred years but would also utilize the resources of modern historical scholarship in the writing of a new history of the whole life of the institution.

The first step to be taken, therefore, both to prepare for the Tercentenary and to mark its significance, was the appointment in 1924 of Samuel Eliot Morison, of the Class of 1908, Professor of History, as Tercentenary Historian. The completion, before the Tercentenary Celebration, of his first volume on *The Founding of Harvard College* and of two volumes on *Harvard in the Seventeenth Century*, together with a volume on *The Development of Harvard University, 1869-1929*, edited by Professor Morison with the collaboration of writers representing each of the principal departments of instruction, provided a sound basis for retrospect on so important an anniversary, and by their timely appearance added greatly to the significance of the occasion.*

THE TERCENTENARY COMMITTEE

In the autumn of 1930 both official and Alumni interest in ensuring timely preparation for the three hundredth anniversary had its first formal expression. The Board of Overseers took the matter up at its meeting of September 23, 1930, and proposed the appointment of a joint committee of the Governing Boards to consider plans. The Corporation on October 13 acceded to this proposal and appointed two of its members to serve on the committee with three representatives of the Board of Overseers. The Directors of the Harvard Alumni Association at their meeting of January 12, 1931, after receiving reports of informal discussions previously held by New York Alumni at the instance of Langdon P. Marvin, '98, and Archibald G. Thacher, '97, ap-

* Professor Morison, "writing as an individual, and not as the official historian," also published *Three Centuries of Harvard*, a volume of 512 pages covering the entire period.

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pointed a committee of three; and on April 13, 1931, this committee was instructed to coöperate with the joint committee of the Governing Boards. After some changes in the personnel of the representatives of the University and of the Alumni, their several committees coalesced as the Tercentenary Committee, its terms of reference being to devise plans for the celebration, to be submitted to the Governing Boards. The Committee was finally constituted as follows: representing the Corporation, President James B. Conant, '14, and Messrs. Henry L. Shattuck, '01, Charles P. Curtis, Jr., '14, and Grenville Clark, '03; representing the Board of Overseers, Messrs. George R. Agassiz, '84, Charles Francis Adams, '88, and Henry James, '99; representing the Alumni, Messrs. Archibald G. Thacher, '97, Joseph L. Valentine, '98, and Professor Alfred M. Tozzler, '00; the Tercentenary Historian, Professor Samuel E. Morison, '08; and, as Chairman of a preliminary committee on Exhibitions, Professor Robert P. Blake, Ph.D. '16, Director of the University Library.

Meanwhile, President Conant had called into consultation a number of members of the Faculties of the University to assist the Tercentenary Committee in arriving at their recommendations. Before definite action was taken, the Committee recommended to the Corporation the appointment of Jerome D. Greene, '96, as Director of the Tercentenary Celebration, and this appointment was made May 14, 1934, to take effect September 1, 1934. The records of the Tercentenary Committee and the various recommendations prepared for its consideration were then turned over to the Director with instructions to prepare the program of the Celebration. The Director took as the basis of his plans the conclusions at which the Tercentenary Committee and the Governing Boards had arrived. These were (1) that the emphasis of the Celebration should be laid on exhibiting the resources of the University of today rather than on the retrospective aspects of the anniversary; (2) that the Celebration should be the occasion for rendering services appropriate to the functions of a university, namely, the holding of sum-

mer schools, conferences, and institutes, culminating in a special gathering of distinguished scholars representing various fields of learning, who should present the results of their research at a conference; (3) that one day of the Celebration should be largely given over to the Alumni; (4) that the period of the concluding ceremonies should include September 18, 1936, the date on which was convened, in 1636, the General Court of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay which, on November 7, recorded the vote establishing the College. Although the latter date was to be regarded as the actual three hundredth anniversary, the fact that it was to fall in the week of the Presidential election, and also that September was more favorable to the participation of other institutions and would be less disturbing to the regular work of the University than a celebration in term would be, were conclusive considerations in favor of the earlier date.

THE GENERAL PLAN

On October 7, 1934, the Director presented to the Tercenary Committee a provisional plan covering all the principal features of the Celebration; and with a few minor changes in the time schedule the plan was approved and recommended to the Governing Boards. It was adopted by the Corporation on October 8 and by the Board of Overseers on the same day. The concluding ceremonies and festivities were fixed for September 16, 17, and 18. On the first day the Delegates of other institutions were to be formally received by the Governing Boards and Faculties of the University. The second day was to be Alumni Day. Early in the morning there was to be a Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance in the Memorial Church, attended by the Governing Boards and Faculties of the University, delegations of the Students and Alumni, and the Delegates of other institutions. The rest of the morning was to be devoted to the annual meeting of the Associated Harvard Clubs, and the afternoon and evening to Class Reunions and to those of the associations of the Alumni of the Graduate and