

Nashville Man Recalls USC Changes In 40 Years

State 10-1-39
To the Editor of The State:

Doctor Green's comments on by-gone days at Carolina made me think of the changes 40 years have wrought. This communication will probably enrich the waste basket but it helps me to get some thoughts off my chest.

I entered the South Carolina college in September, 1895. Perhaps no greener hayseed ever struck the campus. I had less than \$50, and little hope of remaining longer than three months. Tuition and room were free. My normal scholarship was worth \$10. Students furnished their rooms as they chose, or could. I roomed with John J. McSwain, then a junior. He had a bed, table, lamp, two chairs, washstand, basin and pitcher. We bunked together. I furnished some bed clothes, and paid for half the oil for the lamp and fuel for the fire. We lugged our fuel and water up to, and ashes and slops down from—when we didn't throw them out the window—room 12 on the third floor of West Rutledge.

There were considerably fewer than 200 students. Most of the boys boarded at the old "Mess Hall," at the corner of Main and Green, run by a Negro, Ike Peterson. The fare was usually tough, especially the beef. It cost only \$8 a month. The boys seemed to thrive on it. My small sum carried me till Christmas.

I was conditioned on two or three entrance examinations. All my professors passed me at the end of the quarter. No more was heard about the conditions. I might say that no professor ever flunked me during my four years in college.

I went home for the holidays, with little hope of ever returning. Thanks to a friend I returned with \$60. This carried me to the end of the session. I judge my expenses for the session were less than \$125.

The next year I taught a one-room school, for seven months, at \$25 a month. The \$175 looked like a fortune. I had to eat a little food, and wear some clothes. I paid for some clothes, bought on credit before I first entered college. I returned to Carolina in September, 1897, without enough money to carry me through the session.

About 1893 the Carolina alumni in my native county decided to contribute \$100 a year, for four years to aid some needy Carolina student from the county. No pledge was exacted from the beneficiary. He was told that if he ever felt able and inclined he should hand over an equal amount to some deserving boy, on the same condition, and thus the scholarship might be made perpetual.

John J. McSwain was the first beneficiary of this fund. I do not know whether he received \$100 the first year. I understand the amount fell short the second year. Then he arranged to get help from another source and asked the alumni to let me have what they could raise. They handed me \$28, and dropped the project.

McSwain was graduated in 1897. He taught a few years while preparing for the bar examination. Out of his first year's salary, he paid to me, in keeping with his moral obligation, a part of the amount he had received from the alumni. This, added to what I had saved from my teaching, enabled me to go through

the second session. I left the campus in June, 1898, with little hope of ever seeing it again.

In those days a student, selected by the faculty, was paid \$75 a session to ring the bell, which hung in the tower of DeSaussure college. The \$75 was sufficient to pay his board for nine months. The job was much sought after. The job was not hard but regular. The bell was expected to ring on the dot; early in the morning for students to rise; about 8:30 for chapel; then, beginning at 9 a. m., every hour until 4 p. m., five days in the week, and till noon on Saturday.

Before leaving in June, 1898, I made written application for the bell ringers' job. I was agreeably surprised a few weeks later that the job was mine. I rang the bell two sessions. What the job paid, supplemented by more of the alumni fund, turned over to me by McSwain, enabled me to complete the course and receive the B. A. degree in 1900.

College was a struggle, but I enjoyed it. Limited funds prevented my getting much a student should get in college. Every penny was precious. More than once it looked as if I should have to give up the struggle. I did not attend an athletic game, nor any other event where a fee was charged, during my four years in college, except a visit to the State fair, at the old grounds on Elmwood avenue, during my first fall in Columbia. It hurt my conscience to spend the 50 cents for admission, but I thought it was probably the only chance I would ever have to see the fair. For three sessions I was active in the Clarion Literary society. This was not a requirement. At times I hardly saw how I could spare money for the fees, small as they were. But I managed to pay them; and I believe they have paid me the largest rate of dividends of any money I ever invested.

I went out to teach at a small salary. I was resolved to pass on to some deserving boy the amount of the alumni funds I had used. I left the matter to McSwain, who was practicing law. He selected a boy from our native county. We paid him the money as we thought he needed it, and took his receipts. He attended Carolina two sessions, then attended for a time the college of his church. In time he became pastor of a church in a thriving town, which should, and probably did, pay him a fair salary. He got married, but has never returned a penny of the alumni fund. The last I saw or heard of him he was much in arrears for house rent and was peddling condiments from house to house.

Twenty men and one woman were in the academic class of 1900, the largest class for a number of years. Some of them I have not seen since graduation. Some have passed on. I don't know where a number of the living are. I have seen only one of them, and heard from one other in 15 years. I shall probably never see any of them again. If by chance any of them should see these lines I would appreciate a note.

When I entered the college Dr. James Woodrow was president. He taught geology, botany and physiology. I met him only three times. I went to his office when I first reached the campus and was courte-

ously received. He came to see me when I was sick in the infirmary, seemed solicitous about my health, and spoke words of encouragement. Just before I left at the close of my freshman year, I went, at the suggestion of a friend, to his office and asked for a copy of his lecture on evolution, which he kindly gave me. He treated me as if I were a dignitary than a hayseed who was beginning to think he had reached the estate of a "wise fool" (sophomore). He arose and shook hands with me when I entered, conversed courteously for a few moments, walked with me to the door, shook hands again, and wished me well. I cannot recall that I ever saw him after I left the campus that June. Since that day I have been in the offices of 12 college presidents—11 of them after I became a teacher. Only one of them treated me with courtesy that approached that of Dr. James Woodrow.

Other members of the faculty and their subjects were: Benjamin Sloan, physics; W. B. Burney, chemistry; E. L. Patton, ancient languages; E. S. Joynes, modern languages; R. Means Davis, history and political science; J. W. Flinn, mental and moral science; F. C. Woodward, English; F. H. Colcock, mathematics; Patterson Wardlaw, pedagogics and Latin; Col. Joseph Daniel Pope, law. All these except Colonel Pope became my honored preceptors. Only Burney had a Ph. D. degree. A number of them held the M. A. degree; and some only the B. A. But in thoroughness of scholarship and teaching ability, I believe some of those with only the bachelor's degree surpassed many of the modern Ph. D's. I say this after having sat in the classrooms of more than 20 Ph. D's since I left Carolina.

In 1897 Doctor Woodrow resigned the presidency and was succeeded by F. C. Woodward. Dr. W. S. Leathers was called to the chair of biology. J. J. McMahan was employed to assist in the English department for one session. In 1898 Doctor Patton was replaced by C. W. Bain, and G. A. Wauchope came as associate professor of English. In 1899 Doctor Leathers was succeeded by L. C. Glenn, who went to Vanderbilt university the next year as professor of geology.

Of the 16 professors who taught at Carolina while I was there, 12 tried their luck on me. The personality and teaching of only two of them stand out in my memory. Probably because his were my favorite subjects, because he was an inspiring teacher, and because I took four years under him I believe I got more that has been worth while to me from Prof. R. Means Davis than from any other teacher. I also took four years work with Professor Wardlaw, but I took two of them in one year. I do not remember much he tried to teach me. But his earnestness, thoroughness and skill as an instructor, and his fairness, and readiness to help his students form a bright spot in my memory. To these two men, I feel that I am most indebted for what little success I may have achieved as a teacher.

All but four of the 16 professors named have gone to that bourne from which no traveler returns. Wardlaw has just retired. I trust he is enjoying a well-earned rest. Wauchope still carries on at Carolina. Leathers and Glenn are at Vanderbilt university, the former as dean of the medical school, the latter as professor of geology.

Leathers and Glenn remained too short a time to become well known in the state. All the others have undoubtedly left their impress, some greater than others, on South Carolina. I can imagine their spirits hovering over the campus to inspire generation of students yet to come.

B. J. WELLS

LaGrone Becomes Assistant To President of University

Resigns Place
As Industrial
Agent for City

State 4-2-39

The board of trustees of the University of South Carolina created the position of assistant to the president at its meeting March 14, providing that the duties are to be such as are assigned by from time to time by the president, Dr. J. Rion McKissick.

T. E. LaGrone was chosen by the committee on student affairs of the board of trustees in conjunction with the president. Mr. LaGrone resigned yesterday as city industrial agent for Columbia.

"For the present Mr. LaGrone will spend part of his time making contacts in the interest of the university with alumni, supporters of the university and the people generally throughout the state," President McKissick said last night.

"One of his tasks will be to develop and improve the public relations of the university and to keep our alumni and others fully informed as to its advancement and needs. The university hopes that hereafter it will secure more and wider support from its alumni and friends than heretofore. It is planned that a good deal of Mr. LaGrone's work will be directed toward this objective."

"His long, unwavering loyalty to the university, his business experience, his pleasant personality, fine character and real ability well fit him for service to his alma mater."

Mr. LaGrone, a native of Edgefield county, a graduate of the Batesburg high school, the University of South Carolina and Georgetown university, served in the house of representatives from Saluda county, 1915-16, and was the author of the act providing for the teaching of agriculture and domestic science in consolidated schools as well as of other agricultural and educational legislation. After graduating in law at the university, he practiced in Greenville and in Titusville, going into business later in Florida. He was sales manager for western North Carolina and South Carolina for the Certain-teed Products company and afterward vice president and sales manager of the Glenn Thread company, Lincolnton, N. C.