

# Perspectives

## A personal view of the University

### Time Traveler

The third volume of *SU history*, *Syracuse University III: The Critical Years*, was published during the summer. The volume covers the terms of Chancellor Charles W. Flint and Chancellor William P. Graham, and was prepared by Richard Wilson, former director of the *SU News Bureau*, utilizing manuscripts written by W. Freeman Galpin (author of volumes one and two) and Oscar T. Barck Jr., both former *SU* professors of history. Featured below are excerpts from "Time Traveler: The Alumni Remember."

Copies of *The Critical Years* are available for \$20 by writing to *SU Press*, 1600 Jamesville Avenue, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210.

Travel into the past is not condoned by physicists but is practiced every day by those who browse in the historical records and other archives of the University.

Alumni and others who travel back through time are rewarded with glimpses of a gentler, more leisurely era. The patina of nostalgia settles over the past. A kind of magic invests events long gone.

"Is that the way we were?" the time traveler asks. "Was it that long ago?"

"That's the way it was in the twenties, the thirties, and a bit of the forties," the chronicler replies. "But if you let the magic work for you, it will seem to have been only yesterday."

The Reverend Donald G. Wright, A.B. '32, Ph.D. '38, in his history of Hendricks Chapel, writes amusingly of the timidity with which the administration approached a certain course in 1935-36:

"As a result of a large number of petitions on the issue, Syracuse University, with a kind of reluctant wariness, allowed a non-credit course on the subject of marriage to be held in Hendricks Chapel. . . . The initial enrollment was 150, with more and more students wanting to participate; this led to the

course being moved from the Colonial Room to the main auditorium of the chapel. The whole enterprise excited considerable interest and attention. Interestingly enough, when the marriage course was rescheduled the following year it had a very bland, noncontroversial title—"The Art of Living." . . .

Dr. Wright noted that the course received "a good deal of attention beyond the campus," including coverage by *Woman's Home Companion*, the *Toronto Star*, and the national parent-teacher magazine, and that "the academic authorities" were still wary of it. He added: "Under the repeated requests of students, however, a non-credit course was projected for the second semester under the title 'Personal Relations.' The sessions were held in Hendricks Chapel, and before it was over approximately 780 students had participated."

How orange was adopted as the color of Syracuse University was described in June 1940 at the fiftieth reunion of the Class of 1890. The chronicler was Frank J. Marion, the motion picture pioneer. Marion, a member of the class he said was responsible for the change from the colors pink and blue, recalled:

"At the end of our senior year Syracuse accepted the challenge of Hamilton College to a track meet and . . . a number of us went along to cheer our team. We wore high collars, right up under our chins—cutaway coats, baggy trousers, and rolled-brim derby hats. On our canes we had ribbons of the college colors, pink and blue.

"Much to our surprise, we won the meet, and on the train coming home from Utica we tried to 'whoop it up.' What kind of 'whoopee' can be made with pink and blue, the pale kind that you use on babies' what-do-you-call-thems? It just couldn't be done!

"So on Monday morning a lot of us went to see the Chancellor in his office and told him our tale of woe. Chancellor Sims was a kindly old gentleman, a real father to us all, and he was very sympathetic. He



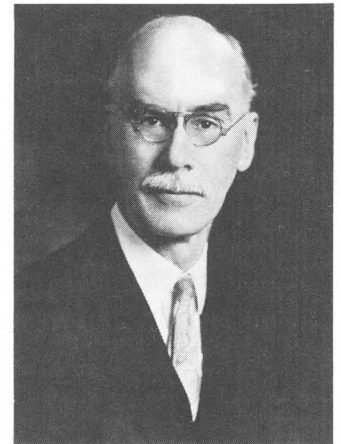
Chancellor Charles W. Flint

agreed that pink and blue were not very suitable colors."

Professor J. Scott Clark was named chairman of a committee to find new colors, Marion said. "I recall that we seniors had a sneaking idea that we might put over our class colors, orange and olive green." Professor Clark consulted Baird's Manual, then the authority on college matters, to see what combinations of orange were already taken. Orange and blue were the most popular, but orange alone apparently was not claimed by any school and was Syracuse's for the taking. It was adopted unanimously by the committee, the faculty, the Alumni Association, and finally the trustees.

Kalman Druck, editor-in-chief of the *Daily Orange* in 1936 and later a New York public relations executive, was one of the organizers of a campus group calling itself Veterans of Future Wars. Taking its cue from World War I veterans pressing for a federal bonus, the students demanded a bonus in advance, "before we're dead." That movement, begun at Princeton as a burlesque, grew into a national antiwar protest.

A vanished tradition is the flour rush. Freshmen attacked Crouse College Hill and sophomores did their best to repel them. The event was annual but its date variable,



Chancellor William P. Graham

supposedly coinciding with the last day of fall registration.

The *Post-Standard* campus correspondent, Ernest J. Bowden, wrote of "the philosophy of a flour-rush" in the late 1920's asking "Why are the gates of wisdom varnished with such an uproarious spectacle?"—that of several hundred freshmen, armed with bags of flour, storming a hill defended by several hundred sophomores armed with a fire hose. Bowden saw a safety valve in the fray. "For a few hours the campus is given over to the wildest horseplay—but in daylight, and under the friendly though unconscious supervision of juniors and seniors. "This is a lightning rod for higher temper or strained susceptibility. And it works. Freshmen and sophomores settle down to the business of the campus, and midnight forays and hazing are forgotten."

The flour rush was abolished toward the end of the (Chancellor) Graham years, in November 1941, after a defending sophomore fell and suffered a leg injury. This tradition and others had begun to wane before that, a student government representative said. Howard Miller '42, who was doing research on the subject, said that at Syracuse throughout its history "traditions have been observed—at some times with great spirit and at others with less." He added: "We are now in one of those 'less' periods."