

NEW YORK STATE VETERINARY COLLEGE  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY ITHACA, NEW YORK



CHRISTMAS  
1 9 4 5

TO THE ALUMNI:

After five war Christmases we finally have peace. This brings a feeling of joy and thanksgiving to all of us. Yet the war is not fully over for most of us and especially for those who will spend this Christmas in foreign lands. I have just returned from the E.T.O. and I know how you feel. At home we are in the midst of readjustments occasioned by the sudden ending of the war and the huge problems caused by the necessities of reconversion. Before another Christmas all of you in military service abroad should be home, and it is hoped that peace-time adjustments will be far advanced.

Before the end of another year I hope we may have been able to compile the military records of the alumni. They are very fragmentary now. May I ask each of you, as a special favor, to fill in and return the enclosed information sheet? Please do it now before you forget it, and do not let modesty prevent you from giving the full story.

Joint committees of the faculty and alumni are at work on plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the College. They are not yet fully developed but it is likely that the celebration will take the form of a reunion held in late August 1946. In recent years many of the alumni have been a part of the "far-flung battle line" all over the world, and it is thought that an opportunity to meet again and "talk it out" in the old familiar surroundings would be especially welcome. Further information about these plans will be sent you in good time, and we shall be disappointed if a considerable proportion of you are not here with us.

You already know of the death of Professor-emeritus W. L. Williams. "Uncle Billy" to the older students who knew him during his active years passed away on October 23rd at the age of 89. His rugged honesty and keen powers of observation and deduction earned him the respect of the veterinary world. His textbooks are used in the veterinary schools of all English-speaking countries and translations have been made into Spanish and Italian. Although he has lived in retirement



for a quarter century, his mentality was unimpaired until the end, and his health was excellent until only a few months ago. Until very recently he maintained an active interest in his profession and kept his textbooks up to date by frequent revisions. Many of you were inspired by the vitality he displayed when giving his historical address at our Conference last January. His intolerance for sham and even for honest opinions differing from his own made many enemies but he had many strong and admiring friends as well. For many years he was a "storm center" in veterinary meetings and in the veterinary press. Being human, he was not always right. I have long felt that one of his important contributions to veterinary science was the stimulation he gave to many others to provide clear-cut proof that he was wrong in some of his assumptions. He was one of the "grand old men of Cornell" who have made the University famous throughout the world. We mourn his passing but are grateful for his long and useful life and for the memories of him that will endure in the minds of those who knew him as long as they shall live.

Professors-emeritus Hopkins and Udall have enjoyed good health and have continued active work. The war-time accelerated teaching program placed a heavy strain on the members of the active faculty but we have stood it reasonably well. By the end of the present collegiate year the College will have been in almost continuous session for fourteen consecutive terms. Younger men than many of us would have felt strain under such conditions.

The accelerated teaching schedule has been dropped since there is no longer need for it. The decision really was made a year ago when it was decided not to accept a new class in February of this year but to postpone it until this fall. Since we graduated a class in February without taking a new one to replace it, we have had only three classes since that time. This will continue until 1948 when there will be no graduating class. A new class was accepted this fall. Because of pressure from good candidates who were released late from military service a total of 46 was accepted, a few more than our normal quota of 40. Our total enrollment of undergraduates now is 116, a decrease from our usual number because of the condition just described.

Last August we announced plans for a short refresher course for graduate veterinarians returning from military service. Recently it was determined to begin it on January 7th. Registrations for the course are now being accepted and much interest in it is being shown. Four weeks of special intensive instruction will be offered and this can be followed, if desired, by two, four, or six weeks of clinical or other special work. Those who are interested and have not already done so may register with Hadley Stephenson, who is director of the course. Registration



will be limited and only those who have been definitely accepted in advance can be accommodated. If there is sufficient demand for a repetition of this course in the spring, it will be given.

The plans for a new building to replace James Law Hall have been completed and approved, and the legislature has made an appropriation of \$396,000 for its construction. We have no information about when the work will be done but presumably it will have to wait for a year or more because of present scarcities of materials and labor. An additional allotment of \$730,000 has been made by the State's Post-War Planning Commission for new construction for the College. This is intended to provide new quarters for the Flower library, the Department of Anatomy, and the Department of Surgery and Large Animal Clinic. It will include, also, a new auditorium. The new structure will eliminate the present wings of James Law Hall. The architects are now beginning work on the plans.

Last June the veterinary faculty formally adopted a new curriculum which had been developed after months of study by a special committee of which Gordon Danks was chairman. It became operative this fall for the entering class, but the upper classes will continue on the old plan. The new curriculum is more than a series of minor adjustments in the old for it introduces a teaching method that is essentially new in the veterinary field. Nearly all didactic or classroom teaching is done during the first, second, and third years. During the fourth year the students will be almost wholly free to spend their time in the clinics. Divided into groups of small size, the fourth-year students will be required to study their cases in detail, applying all the basic disciplines that are likely to be helpful in arriving at specific diagnoses and in applying scientific treatments. If the patients fail to recover, the same students will be required to conduct the autopsies and to carry out pathological, bacteriological and chemical examinations that may be indicated. American medical schools are using this method of teaching with conspicuous success. It is learning by doing, rather than by watching and listening. It will, we believe, result in a more thorough understanding of the nature of disease and of therapeutics. We are very hopeful of the results. A moderate increase in our clinical staff and a new clinico-diagnostic laboratory will be required for this type of teaching. We hope to obtain these by the time they are needed.

Since the last Christmas letter was written, nine of your group have answered the final roll call. These were: Fred W. Cruickshanks, '18, of Hagerstown, Md.; Capt. Dell C. Bassett, '25, of Fort Dix, N. J.; James E. Helyar, '38, of Meadville, Pa.; LaVerne Dunham, '10, of Geneseo, N. Y.; John R. Burns, '07, of Ithaca, N. Y.; James V. Lyon, '14, of Pekin, Ill.; Paul A. Raymond, '25, of Somerville, Mass.; Ed-



ward A. Caslick, '22, of Paris, Ky.; and Marion E. Dennington, '16, of Tully, N. Y.

According to a recent tabulation, 177 alumni of the college are now deceased—about 13 per cent or a little less than one out of seven. According to our records 1358 have been graduated and 1181 of these are now living.

“Leaf after leaf drops off, flower after flower,  
Some in the chill, some in the warmer hour;  
Alive they flourish, and alive they fall,  
And Earth who nourished them receives them all.  
Should we, her wiser sons, be less content  
To sink into her lap when life is spent?”

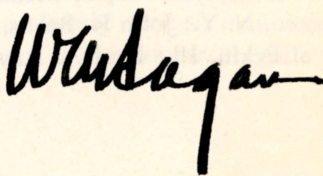
—Walter Savage Landor

Those who have not seen the campus in recent months will find some changes. Across the green in front of James Law Hall, on the west side of East Avenue is a large excavation marking the beginning of the new Administration Building of the University. In another year the boys who play ball on the green will have to take care not to bat their flies into the window of President's Day's office. Behind Balch Hall is another great hole from which some steel and brick are beginning to show. This will be another unit in the women's dormitory system. In the State's post-war building program there are plans for a new library building for the College of Agriculture, and a new Agricultural Engineering Building is “in the books” for that college. Among the endowed colleges there are plans for a complete new development for the College of Engineering. It looks as if there would be many changes during the next ten years.

Plans are about complete for the Annual Conference for Veterinarians in January as usual. It will be held on the 9th, 10th and 11th. We hope for a good attendance. Transportation should not be difficult this year but the housing situation in Ithaca is unusually tight because of large numbers of returning students. Those who plan to attend should make arrangements for rooms as soon as they can. We will endeavor to help those who need it to find satisfactory accommodations but please write us at least a few days in advance.

In behalf of our faculty, may I express the hope that this Christmas will be one of joy for you and yours, that those who are separated from their families may soon be reunited, and that the coming year will be one of prosperity for all of you.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. Savage Landor", written in a cursive style.