

Associated with the University since the early Twenties, the author gives a brief Comparison of student attitudes during the intervening decades and concludes that

They've Grown Up!

By Roscoe Cate, '26ba

How do college students of today compare with those of past decades?

Time Magazine's recent survey of "The Younger Generation" finds the students of today a bit grim, a bit resigned to the inevitability of trouble, and more than a little inclined to search for security rather than adventure.

Students at the University of Oklahoma are a part of the national picture, but Oklahoma is a young state and the effects of its pioneering spirit are still an asset to the Oklahoma students. Independence, self-reliance, and unwillingness to let others solve your problems for you—these are marks of the pioneer who preferred to make his own life among the hardships of a new territory rather than conform to the set conventions of a mature community.

Nevertheless, University of Oklahoma students have gone through the same cycles as college students all over the country during the last thirty years.

Persons too young to remember the "Jazz Age" of the Twenties can find in the stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald the mood of that decade. It was a time when the coonskin coat, the hip-pocket flask, the flouting of conventions, were more than just caricatures of college life.

At O.U., as at other campuses, Flaming Youth was out for a good time. The secret fraternity DDMC, composed of leading students on the campus, was active in its avowed determination to keep campus affairs on a high standard—but it wore masks and threatened timid freshmen by midnight visits to carry out the order's lofty aims.

The principal business of the Student Council was to conduct all-University dances at a handsome profit, much of which went to the politically appointed dance manager.

The *Oklahoma Daily* concerned itself almost exclusively with campus affairs, and only the most startling news of state, national or international scope could receive mention in the *Daily*.

The serious work of the University went on as usual, and there were earnest stu-

dents who then, as now, were able to pass up the froth and get a real education. But by and large, it was a decade of aimless drifting for many college students.

In the Thirties the great depression threw its shadow on the campus. Faculty morale suffered as salary rates dropped. Most students fought a battle for economic survival. Instead of demanding more football tickets, state political leaders threw their influence into demands for campus jobs for worthy students from their home towns. The late Alumni Secretary Ted Baird, '21ba, found himself so beset by such job hunters each weekend that he had to leave town to get any rest. The Federal Government set up the NYA (National Youth Administration) as a campus equivalent of the WPA. Never had so many University offices had so many file clerks!

Students of the Thirties, fearful of the job-hunting ordeal they would face after leaving the University, had a new appreciation of the economic facts of life. The froth of campus life grew very thin. A job paying 25 cents an hour was the prized passport to a college degree. Many a boy or girl worked four hours a day for room and board, and another two or three hours a day for money to buy the other bare necessities. Many actually suffered for lack of adequate meals. More than half of all students in the University were working to pay part of their expenses.

This was a time when ambition and determination paid off in college degrees. But it was also the beginning of the planned economy stage in the evolution of American government. It was the day of the New Deal, and students, like their elders, began to look to Washington for the solution to economic problems—to look for economic security.

Many of the ablest students became crusaders for equality of economic opportunity. These were not Communists—certainly not Communists in the present sense of the word—but they were idealists visioning a promised land in which the government would guarantee jobs and security for all. For the most part, students of the Thirties were serious about national af-

fairs, but not especially concerned about anything outside this country.

In the Forties, college students suddenly acquired a world perspective. College campuses almost overnight became schools for girls and freshmen, plus armed forces trainees, as the older students enlisted for World War II.

Then in the late Forties the flood of veterans hit the campuses like a tidal wave. At the peak, the University of Oklahoma had 7,000 veterans and 5,000 non-veterans. Many of the veterans were four, six or eight years older than others in their classes. More than half of those at O.U. were married; more than half of the married students had children.

No college campus, after such an experience, ever will be quite the same.

The maturity of the G. I. students, their seriousness of purpose, their contempt for fuddy-duddy teaching, their lack of interest in campus capers, established an atmosphere that made the campus of the Twenties seem extremely juvenile by comparison.

But what of the students of today? Those who set the pattern for the Fifties?

The resilience of youth fortunately is still with us, so there is no lack of ability to laugh, and to avoid taking oneself too seriously. But there is a new and different sense of values.

The present college generation seems to believe:

a) That the world is facing uncertainties and even fear for years to come—until there can be some kind of resolution of the basic conflict between Communism and the democratic nations—and all Americans have to take part in the sacrifices.

b) That there is little hope for the average young person of today to plan for college education, marriage and a career on a "normal" basis, because all plans are subject to change for defense reasons.

c) That there is so little opportunity for financial success for the individual enterpriser; that most young men want jobs with established corporations, where they can hope for economic security.

d) That there is a serious need for a

revival of interest in religion and ethics—not so much the formalities of church ceremony as a soul-searching exploration of every-day morals and ethics.

Students of today see Korea as a dirty mess that has to be cleaned up. No one is anxious to go—yet few are looking for excuses when the call comes. War has taken its place as a part of living, for unnumbered years ahead. It is something to regret, to resent, but to accept.

As *Time's* "The Younger Generation" puts it, "There is a feeling that the world is in a ten-round bout, and that there will be no quick or easy knockout."

There are signs that the present student generation is coming of age in more ways than one. A fraternity chapter announces that it will cancel plans for an expensive float in the annual Homecoming parade and will devote the time and money saved to redecoration of a charitable institution in Oklahoma City.

The University adds a new professor of the Philosophy of Ethics and Religion and his classes are crowded immediately. Five class sections in Marriage Orientation offered in fall of 1951 had enrolments ranging up to more than fifty.

Students now serve on many faculty committees—the Student Conduct Committee, Athletic Council, Union Board of

Managers, and many others—with dignity and effectiveness.

Of course today's student body, like any community of 8,000 human beings, has its hell raisers, its nonconformists. They are quickly recognized by most young moderns as individuals with serious personality adjustment problems—cases for a psychological counselor or a psychiatrist.

It's always dangerous to generalize about people.

Time's survey, apparently compiled from reports of numerous correspondents, pictures the younger generation of today as "silent," "grave and fatalistic," "conventional and gregarious," with "confused morals," "expecting disappointment," "wanting a faith," and "willing to serve."

This many-sided survey, like the report of the blind men examining an elephant, does not provide an integrated picture of the students of today.

Perhaps the contrasts between the student generations could be summarized this way:

In the Flaming Twenties, students were aimless, and narrow in their interests.

In the Depression Thirties, students began looking to big government to solve economic problems, to make clever new rules for distribution of wealth.

Students in the Forties were a war gen-

eration, unable to think of much else but the demands of war and the importance of getting back to the campus to resume their interrupted educations.

As the Fifties begin, students are middle-of-the-roaders. They no longer see any simple, easy solution for all problems by economic formulas. They no longer believe that there is such a thing, in our time, as a war to end all war.

They are often discouraged because they realize the enormity of the world's problems, and they find it hard to see how one individual can do much about it.

But the present student generation is mature and realistic in comparison with past decades. Students have "grown up."

Unusual Situations . . .

Limber's losing time in school worked out fine with the Limber-Samaras team though. Samaras lost a year of school, too, when he was in the navy after high school.

Extra-curricular time is full for Limber. He likes sports, poker and music. He attends all the Big Red football games. "I always take my radio with me," he explained. And when the boys play poker, it's just a "friendly game"—for all of Limber's cards have to be marked.

First of Her Sex. Folks say a girl will try anything now-a-days to get into the movies. One O.U. coed came up with a different angle that payed off, and soon she'll be seeing herself in the movies. She joined the University's naval science classes and became the first of her sex to do so.

Representatives of the Fox Movietone News Service called at the NROTC headquarters at the O.U. armory to shoot films which will be shown throughout the nation and later on television.

Miss Martha McCabe, sociology junior from Oklahoma City, posed for informal pictures illustrating her activities as a naval student and a college Jane.

When Miss McCabe asked to enroll in the naval sciences program early this semester, officers thought it was a joke. After two weeks of red tape, however, she was allowed to enter the classes. Recently she was named as technical advisor of the student newspaper published by the university naval unit, the *Flag Hoist*.

Football Library. "Say let's knock off the books for awhile and run upstairs and watch the game."

Not an uncommon statement now, since the second floor in the north end of Owen Stadium houses the new Lower Division

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Maybe their parents needed escape avenues in the form of Flunkies Flings, fish swallowing and flagpole sitters to get away from a high-g geared tempo of living. But the youth of today, compared to their parents, have grown up. Their gab-fests aren't so loud and are tinged more with social problems than with mere idle ideology.

with the 45th Division in Hokkaido, Japan.

David Young, '42ba, Sapulpa, has been promoted to the rank of major in the Marine Corps Reserve and is now on duty with the First Marine Division in Korea.



Lt. (j.g.) Lewis G. Timberlake, USN, '46eng, is on duty in the Public Works Office at the naval base in Charleston, S. C. Timberlake was a V-12 student.

Football Library . . .

Library for freshman and sophomores. The new north end addition of the stadium was designed to improve library services to the younger students and also planned to free the general library for other use.

The tables in the unique library vary in size and shape. Colorful occasional chairs and lounges make the studying atmosphere a more pleasant one. The room itself has light-colored tile floor, acoustical tile ceiling, birch panelling and florescent lights. Cross-ventilation is also provided and there is a separate lobby entrance to the library.

Books for the undergraduate library will be obtained by transfer from the general library. Around 6,000 volumes of reserves, 2,500 volumes of general readings and 200 volumes of references books will be transferred. About 4,000 books will be purchased for the new library. The library hopes to obtain a collection of sound recordings also.

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