

UCSC-History

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For as long as I can remember I have been close, in many ways, to the University of California; enjoying the personal friendships of many of the Faculty and sharing creative and wilderness experiences with them. The development of concepts of conservation and the protection of the Natural Scene have been stimulated by the great men and women associated with our higher institutions of learning. The founders of the Sierra Club were largely Faculty, graduates and associates of the University of California who — with some leading men of affairs in the business and professional world — joined with John Muir to form what is now one of the most far-reaching and effective organizations of its kind in the world. I would like at this moment to pay tribute to William E. Colby (who passed away last November in his ninetyeth year) on whom fell the mantle of John Muir. One of the towering conservationists of our time, he was not only the great leader of the Sierra Club, but a prime force in the establishment and growth of the California State Parks. He, too, was of the honored family of the University of California and he was most enthusiastic over the quality and prospects of our new Campus here at Santa Cruz. In truth, the University of California has a great record and tradition in the preservation and appreciation of nature and this has served to unite many minds and spirits in the noble common purpose.

This tradition is being carried on here at Santa Cruz through the efforts of Chancellor McHenry and his staff and the planners and architects involved. It is warmly encouraged by the Regents and the University Administration and the leading citizens of our central coast area. I am not being merely sentimental in saying that this new Campus can be and — God be willing and man be patient — *will* be one of the most beautiful and effective campuses anywhere in the world. We are not striving for the medieval solemnity of Oxford and Cambridge, the urban intensities of the Universities of London and Paris, or the deeply colonial and traditional aspects of Harvard, Yale and Princeton. We do have, however, the opportunity to establish a new and vital tradition, a demonstration of the appropriate relationship of man to his environment. In this time of common desecration of the earth and its bounty through disordered patterns of development and exploitation, this new Campus will provide for students (who must shoulder the burdens of the difficult times ahead) a memorable experience of living and learning in an environment of rare beauty and wonder. It is unthinkable that this extraordinary prospect will not be fully realized. Its realization, however, depends upon the efforts of everyone concerned with the University, with the students, with the City of Santa Cruz, and with the progress of the entire State of California. What will happen here will prove a kind of Reformation, a gentle

discarding of the old methodology and an adventure in the building of a new society — “proportionate to nature”.

This is an opportunity which is extremely rare — perhaps unique — in our time. A fresh area, a fresh environmental development, and a fresh approach to education! It is important that the end result be fresh in spirit and firm in hope. Old and conventional concepts may be groomed to fit in physically — yet they might never relate, in the larger sense, to the problems of man struggling with a dwindling natural resource and beauty.

It is a fact that our area is not a true wilderness. Nevertheless, it has some wilderness aspects which have re-asserted themselves after a century-old general exploitation of lumbering, mining and grazing. What we see today is a landscape which is, in a way, recovering from some severe use but which might easily suffer a final relapse. It has the great charm of rural integrity (western style); the barns, fences and kilns have considerable human significance. They represent a vital period of California rural and mining effort. They have qualities peculiar to the area. These qualities must be preserved to the fullest extent and reflected in the design and space relationships of the structures we are to build. The area echoes past exploitations — quarries, logging, pasturage — but the scars are being gently and miraculously softened. Instead of the great single boles of the primeval redwoods we have the “fairy rings” of the younger trees — a growth perhaps rare in nature but common as a scar-tissue phenomenon of lumbering. Under the trees, in hilly glades and steep gullies, the original ground cover is reasserting itself. The old oaks are dying with inevitable Homeric resignation but new ones are developing with vigor.

Experience has informed me that relatively few of our people comprehend the vast importance of the Natural Scene, and the greater importance of man making proper adjustment to it. Nature offers us not merely recreation — but the re-creation of mind and heart at the higher levels of spiritual experience. The materialist has a difficult time trying to relate the human spirit to a grove of redwoods — even second growth! — but I am sure that all of us here and countless others at various levels of our social and economic structure can vouch for the reality of this experience at some point in their lives. It is an experience which may not be verbalized or analyzed. We know that it exists and that those who have accepted it are usually more realistic and compassionate citizens than those whose natures mirror only the bleak concrete deserts of the contemporary urban scene. It is rewarding indeed to think about the effect our new Campus will have on our students (and on our Faculty as well!).

Some may question the validity of our enthusiasm for the Natural Scene and accuse us of promoting a form of Pantheism and escaping into convenient symbols of a life apart from the agonizing realities of the world of our time. I dispute this; we need the great strength and perspective which exposure to nature offers us. I believe these qualities are not nurtured by the sour intellectual and political tensions which are evident in almost every domain of our culture. Not that there is now more tension, more bitterness, more arrogant extroversion, more greed — these have been with us always — it is that we have more efficient communication, more opportunity for infection and mutual disturbance.

In a sense man has never had it so good — or acted so badly!

Here at Santa Cruz space will not equate with isolation, nature will not be inhuman and remote. Ideas, ideals, principles and procedures will be influenced through continual contact with the elemental and beautiful realities of the environment. Let us never underestimate the importance of contemplation of the vast surge and change of the seasons. To quote Robinson Jeffers:

“A little too abstract, a little too wise,
It is time for us to kiss the earth again,
It is time to let the leaves rain from the skies,
Let the rich life run to the roots again.”

The American Pioneer approached the natural Scene in a very different way than we must now. The land and its provisions were seemingly inexhaustible. The problem of existence were most severe. The pioneer undoubtedly cherished his farm, his ranch and his range — representing something almost infinite in extent and bounty — young, vibrant, ever-enduring. Now, as the blights of over-population, over-exploitation and over-mechanization encroach from all directions, we come to love our land as we would love someone very near and dear who may soon depart, leaving naught but the recollection of a beauty which we might have protected and perpetuated. We must realize — and with desperate conviction — that it *is* truly later than we think!

I believe that our new Campus offers the tremendous opportunity of re-awakening understanding of the potentials of the Natural Scene, of instilling awareness of the realities of the earth, of things beyond the clever facility of man to manipulate; something beyond the contrived disorder of poor planning and architecture and something beyond weak acquiescence to comforts and the “easy way”. From the start we were fortunate here; fine planners and architects responding to enlightened direction. But the always-inherent conflict is not resolved. There have been, and will be, constant pressures for the dilution or

breakdown of our intended pattern. Some say: “It will be too costly” or “It may be too spacious for efficient inter-communication” (the students actually may have to walk a little in the fresh air!) or “It may not have true academic character”. Such objections have been answered adequately: its cost will be low in relation to what will be created. Its very spaciousness is a quality of great advantage to both faculty and students. And I am sure most of us concur that this is the great opportunity to create a new and vital academic character.

Our creative egos may seize upon this precious acreage and trim it to our conventional ideas of “managed” arboreal beauty. It will be easy to do this; to design buildings which relate to the sophistications of erudite society rather than to the silent witnesses of forest, earth and sky. It will be easy to “plan”, to devise, to command. But it will be easier and wiser to relate this project to the quiet splendors of the environment. All depends on what direction our egos take — to relate, or to dominate.

I am distressed when I hear criticism of the great crowding of the present major campuses. The University is doing the best it can. The population is growing — it is NOT doing the best it can! Students must have space in which to physically, mentally and spiritually breathe, classes must be more intimate, implying adequate numbers of fine teachers, and the environment must be conducive to both contemplation and the enthusiasm to create. Our people, as they continue to produce descendants, will have to support the expansion of the University in the most effective and efficient directions. There are many areas in California of great beauty offering appropriate opportunities for effective use; the solution to the expanding student population may lie chiefly in the development of campuses which will partake of the character and plan of U. C. Santa Cruz. I think the public is beginning to comprehend the gravity of the situation. We need constructive effort — not destructive criticism.

Let us be realistic. We have a problem of public education — right here in the City of Santa Cruz (in fact, throughout the entire Monterey Bay area). As the good people of this community fully realize the enormous benefits which will accrue from proximity of the new Campus, they will strive to perfect the surrounding environment to relate to the grandeur of the new Campus concept. While the Campus is, fortunately, reasonably protected by its noble space and topography, it will be to the social and economic advantage of the entire area to grow in spirit and dedication along with the University, and to enact zoning regulations with the long future in mind.

A great potential of achievement lies in the relationship of the University to the area as a whole; Faculty, students and public will share in this. From Santa Cruz to the southern reaches of the Big Sur, inclusion

of important centers to east, north and south (Salinas and King City, Los Gatos and San Jose, Gilroy and Hollister, Monterey and Carmel); all will both benefit and contribute to the great institution of the University. County borders will open warmly; the rich traditions of the Monterey Peninsula will be drawn upon and its established organizations and progress-minded citizens will participate and gain in countless ways. We must remember that Carmel has one of the great Music Festivals in the land — the annual Bach Festival. Monterey has the annual Jazz Festival — an event of increasing importance and national scope. Artists, writers, thinkers and doers thrive throughout the region and they will undoubtedly contribute their creative intensity to support of the University and the cultural progress of the area.

In time distances will be minimized; helicopters, hydrofoils, improved highways (let us hope planned for beauty and signless!), and perhaps rapid-transit will link our varied communities. I can imagine in the not-to-distant future a linked community of creative force and dynamic living, closely related to this new Athens on the rolling hills.

I am not one to look to the past for the patterns of my life today and in the future. I know very well that the present collapses into the past all too rapidly and destructively. As in science and art — whenever the opportunity for a new expression, a new concept, a new daring, presents itself — men should leap at the opportunity, their impetuous embrace of the future tempered only by a clear awareness of past experience. Here at Santa Cruz we have the promise of a superb future. What are some of the directions within the Campus and its programs through which this promise can be realized?

Naturally, the University must give full recognition to the basic academic programs. As in any institution of learning the student will prescribe his own destiny, realizable at maturity. His desires and enthusiasms will be especially productive in the coming years of campus growth and development; it is rare opportunity to be an essential part of a great institution in its formative years. This vitality and enthusiasm must continue through the generations to come. And here in our new Campus we can instigate new programs for which in time we may be widely and appreciatively known. We can think of an institute of fine typography; California is supreme in its contribution to the printing arts. Grubhorn, Nash, Ward Ritchie, Johnck and Seeger, Lawton Kennedy, Adrian Wilson — to name only some of our distinguished artists and craftsmen — have established world-wide reputations in this field.

California has also led in the art of photography: Muybridge, Arnold Genthe, Consuella Kanaga, Imogen Cunningham, Edward Weston, Dorothea Lange,

Wynn Bullock, Brett Weston — an impressive list indeed. Our new Campus is ideally situated to develop the leading Center of Creative Photography. Photography is second only in scope and effectiveness to the printed word in communication, interpretation, and creative expression. Throughout the country departments of creative and applied photography are being established. M. I. T. has just inaugurated a department under Minor White. Ohio State University has a fine department under Clarence White, Jr. The State Universities at Miami and Albuquerque, among others, are making great progress in this direction. It has been difficult for photography to make an effective break-through in old and established institutions. Perhaps at Santa Cruz a great Department of Photography can be realized.

Music can be one of the most important art expressions of our new Campus. I feel that the magnificent environment and favorable climate encourage festival concepts such as those at Tanglewood and Aspen. Those are seasonal in scope — we have a year-long opportunity! In addition, a composer-in-residence program would be most rewarding, related in some ways to the McDowell Colony in New Hampshire.

The finest architectural talent should be commissioned to design an appropriate art center, with auditoriums adapted to both indoor and outdoor use, with galleries and gardens, and all related to the tranquil areas of redwood, oak and meadowland which distinguish our setting.

Last — but not least by any means — I enter a plea for a School of Conservation dedicated to the better understanding of the relationship of man to nature, and of nature to art. This reverts to earlier statements on the importance of our Campus setting and environment and the unique opportunities presented in this domain. A School of Conservation would tie in magnificently with the subjects of planning, architecture and the sciences devoted to extending knowledge of the land, the ocean, and the air around us.

I believe that a truly civilized man will accept the idea that *mood* — the synesthetic relationship of human and natural equivalents — and awareness of the infinite beauty and grandeur of the world on which we live, are of greater importance than the immediate fluorescence of his artificial genius. We may recall that some savants and teachers of the Hellenic age are said to have conducted their classes as a free association of inquiring minds gathered in the shade of trees and perhaps with great vistas before them. If we cannot serve thousands of students in arboreal classrooms, we can, at least, offer them a unique perspective of the world in which they shall live and function in the years to come.