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## UA37/44 Further Ranges

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September 28, 1963

### FURTHER RANGES

For a good portion of the life of our college it was possible to gauge our activities by remembering what was done in other times. For example, for a good many years after the college became a state institution, we followed rather closely the traditions of the old Southern Normal School. And that was perfectly natural; our clientele was approximately what it had been under the older system; we were a single-purpose school, training teachers; most of the students were mature and doing high school work. The school was small enough for our older traditions to be carried out almost exactly as they had been for years on end. Looking back now, I seem to feel that the demands made upon the college during World War I began the changes that soon ripened into our becoming a full four-year college. Something of the old unity disappeared with the coming of the added two college years. Meanwhile the high schools had spread to all parts of the state; our student body was becoming younger and less self-sufficient.

In my own early days here we had a rather full life as students, for we were here, with no easy way to go home or gad about. Our literary societies, however elementary they sometimes were, offered plenty of programs of our own making and certainly offered many of us a chance to grow in whatever social graces we could find. The boarding houses, in their way, offered a unity that was hard to achieve after private boarding places became more common and more stylish. The daily chapel, though far from being perfect in attendance, offered another unifying experience, for we saw every day our entire faculty, sitting up on the long, narrow stage in the old building at the foot of the hill. Providing for a five-day chapel program insured a wide variety of speeches, musical programs, outside speakers, and

student programs. My own first appearance on program occurred when I was taking a course in American literature and was asked by Miss Mattie Reid to be master of ceremonies when our class was the chapel exercise. My introductory remarks, my formal and stiff comments on each speech, and my somewhat wooden attitude must have been laughable then and certainly is now, in memory. But I got my chance to show off, and who doesn't like to do a little strutting of his stuff? Our literary societies offered us a rather full social life as well as a chance to debate or speak or sing or comment. The moving picture show was very new then; our extra money for entertainment was very scarce. But we knew how to have a good time with little expense.

It was only natural that, with our growth after World War I, that we began to draw other types of students. I can recall how Dr. Kinnaman stressed this very thing when we were getting ready to add our two years of college work; some of the faculty thought the dean was a wet-blanket thrower, but soon experience showed us how accurate was his appraisal of our newer student-body. It was no step-down, of course, but a widening out of our influence when we ceased to be purely a teacher-training school and added our other functions.

With modifications, with an ever-increasing drop in the age of our students, with revolutionary changes in the lives of the people who are in our service area, Western has adapted itself to larger and larger enrollments, to many varying phases of education. It is evident, now, that this period of our life as a college, which somewhat ended only four or five years ago, has had to give way to a much larger college, to a much more varied offering. With or without the name, Western is now a university, with the complex problems of a university. To imagine that the college can be run as it was run

when it was less than <sup>sixth</sup> its present size is as silly as to imagine that we could go back to the simple, pastoral, small-school ways of 1908, when I first arrived here. Why, there are more people staying in the largest women's dormitory than were in the entire school when I first came here! It is because of the complications attending our adjustment to being a large, wide-ranging school that a mere reference to what we used to be like does not solve our problems. Suppose I were to tell Dr. Wood that he should run his department, with 31 teachers and almost 3900 students, as I ran it with four or five teachers and 700 to 900 students! I can recall when we first adopted a record card that would not have to be written in, painfully, by hand; some of the teachers preferred the old type, which would run a sane person insane to interpret now. Any general school activity, like athletics, had to fight for existence; in fact, any variation from the mos maiorum, the "customs of the elders," was, on its face, silly or worse. It was only a few years before you became president that several members of the faculty resented the marking off of parking places on the Ogden-Snell campus. One faculty member became the butt of ridicule for insisting on this very improvement in the safety of the college. Of course, it takes more people to run things, for our village-sized college has grown to good-sized-city proportions. Our college community, counting students, teachers, and employees, is the equal of more than the average county-seat town for the state. Whether Western will soon be recognized as a university I do not pretend to know; but it must assume some of the organization, the management, the attitude of the larger-than-college educational institution.